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'THE JUSTICE STONE'  
OR  
THE LAST SACRIFICE

By Christopher M. Dawson.



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“THE JUSTICE STONE”

OR

THE LAST SACRIFICE,

AND OTHER POEMS



Presentation Copy

"THE JUSTICE STONE"

OR

THE LAST SACRIFICE,

AND OTHER POEMS



To

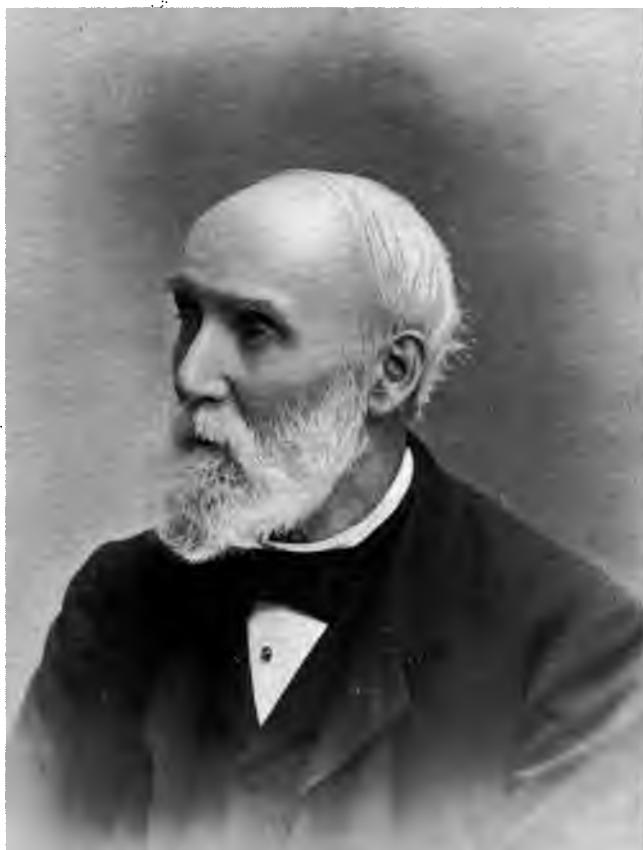
Miss Moss

with the warmest good  
wishes of the Author

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*From a Photo by*

*Pettigrew & Amos, Leith.*

*Yours faithfully,  
G. M. Dawson.*

# “THE JUSTICE STONE”

OR

THE LAST SACRIFICE

*AND OTHER POEMS*

BY

CHRISTOPHER MURRAY DAWSON, F.E.I.S.

AUTHOR OF “AVONMORE, AND OTHER POEMS,” ETC., ETC., ETC.



Edinburgh

R. W. HUNTER

19 GEORGE IV. BRIDGE

1899

ANS 528



To  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE EARL OF HOPETOUN,  
EX-GOVERNOR OF VICTORIA,  
AS A MARK OF HIGH ESTEEM  
FOR HIS PERSONAL WORTH,  
AND  
IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF THE  
MANY ACTS OF KINDNESS  
RECEIVED FROM HIM AND HIS NOBLE HOUSE,  
DURING A RESIDENCE OF MANY YEARS  
AT ABERCORN,  
THIS VOLUME IS (BY PERMISSION) DEDICATED  
BY THE AUTHOR.



## P R E F A C E.

THE very favourable reception given by the *Press* to "Avonmore and other Poems" induces me to make another venture in the same field.

It has been a source of unfeigned pleasure to me to receive so many letters—some from strangers in foreign lands—speaking of hope and encouragement in the battle of life having been drawn from its pages. That the like results may flow from the present volume is my earnest desire.

C. M. D.

EDINBURGH, 1899.





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# “THE JUSTICE STONE”

OR

## THE LAST SACRIFICE.



### INTRODUCTION.

DURING a residence of forty-three years in the parish of Abercorn, the remaining landmarks of its history formed a subject deeply interesting to me ; and not the least of these was its Justice Stone (the *Clach a mhoid* of our ancestors), situated in the Big Wood, Hopetoun. The most primitive places of worship of our forefathers were at the great boulders—the footprints of the ice age—found scattered over the land. These stones, often very different in their nature from the rocks in the neighbourhood, awoke a kind of awe and superstitious dread in the minds of the common people. The priests were not slow to recognize this feeling and turn it to account. At many of these boulders sacrifices and votive gifts to the gods and to the priests were offered ; they also became Seats of Justice. One likes the idea of such Courts being held in the full blaze of the noon-day sun.

After the overthrow of Druidism, they still continued to be used as seats of Justice, and their names, in this connection, are those by which they are now known. The Druids had other courts with special duties and officials assigned to them, and I have been not a little surprised at the fact that in the small parish of Abercorn, we have six place-names still in

our midst referring to these courts, namely :—The Justice Stone, Crawstone, Gallow-hill, the Green-rig, Mounthooly, Beatley (the last two are a few hundred yards beyond its present bounds), and, possibly, Annie's Well, near Bluegate. (See Notes under these respective heads.) I am not aware that this fact has ever been noticed by any previous writer. Surely it is no stretching of evidence to infer from these place-names (their number precludes accident) that we are in a locality where the Druids had one of their chief seats. This may account for the early planting of a church at Abercorn—the second in Scotland—for, to the strongholds of idolatry, the early soldiers of the Cross ever carried their arms, and fought till victory was theirs. The venerable Bede, who died at Jarrow-on-Tyne in 735, says that Trunwin was Pictish Bishop of Aebercurnig in 684, shewing that this church had attained to some degree of eminence at that early date.

The following authorities have been consulted as to the rites of the Druids. Their works are interesting :—Rusk's *Druidism Exhumed* ; Toland's *History of Druidism* ; Davies' *Mythology and Rites of British Druids* ; Julius Cæsar's *Commentaries, Books V. and VI.* ; *Celtic Magazine, etc.*







*Pettigrew & Amos, Leith*

*From a Photo by*

## PRELUDE.

WHERE now a mouldering castle stands <sup>1</sup>  
In pensive gaze o'er Fortha's strands  
    And Hopetoun's princely seat,  
A stranger with a reverent mien  
Stood raptured at the glorious scene  
    Low nestling at his feet.  
The clouds lay slumbering in the air,  
    The vexing winds found rest,  
The sea, like hearts set free from care,  
    Calmed all his troubled breast.

The Dhu-crags, Biemer, Garvie, May,  
Like crafts upon the waters lay,  
    And claimed a moment's gaze ;  
Then west he turned his ravished eye  
And saw a glory-lighted sky—  
    Earth's evening hymn of praise !  
Ben Ledi's brow rose crowned with gold,  
    Dunmyat slept in shade,  
And Voirlich towered a leader bold  
    And his proud homage paid .  
So near lay heaven in things around  
    They whispered, "home of God," .  
While sunk in night earth's sons lay bound,  
    Their only hope—the sod !

Then low he breathed, "Earth knows her God,  
    He thunders in the sea ;  
If earth so fair 'neath sin's dark load,  
    What will heaven's glories be ?

This morn the earth lay wet with tears,  
 Light, baffled, toiled in vain,  
 Clouds prisoned day and mocked men's fears,  
 And nature groaned in pain ;

“ The strife is o'er, the sun—earth's king—  
 With smiles greets lands and seas,  
 And breaking clouds take frightened wing,  
 Or die upon the breeze ;  
 So Lord, Arise ! bid light have birth,  
 Till love's blest dawn shall glad the earth.”

#### PERSONÆ.

RAOUL, *Breir (Squire) of Duntarff.*

OLNA, *Proprietress of Binns.*

TORGRAD, *Yarll (Earl) of Cragdun.*

BORAN, *Arch-Druid of Aebercurnig.*

*Priests of the different Courts.*

MORLAC, THUNE and others, *the first Christian  
 Missionaries.*

RONA, *a maniac.*

## SCENE FIRST.

*Place, BINNS HILL ; 7 Sept., 314<sup>2</sup> ;*

RAOUL AND OLNA.

*Ol.* I'm strangely sad. Come, let us rest and dream.

At eve, lost in the peace around, I here  
Forget my cares ; earth woos me out of self  
And wins me back to smiles, as suns light up  
The sullen tarn. She touches me, we blend,  
Are one, as light and heat are blent. [*A pause.*]  
How proud the Ochils greet the setting sun ;  
A purple shimmer mantles all their flanks,  
Where gorse and heath claim rival homes. The  
vales

Lie nestling in the lap of eve and sink  
To silence and the stars.

*Rao.* (*imitating her tone and style*).

I've seen young spring chase winter up the hills,  
Tearing his ragged skirts from his weak limbs,  
And pelting hard his tottering steps with flowers,  
O, thoughtless spring !

While in the vales she made the woods, drunk with  
Their joy, grow wild with wantonness and love ;

O, giddy spring !

Her fairy folks, tired of their last year's garb,  
Would steal bright yards of sunset for new robes,  
And coax the moon to pin ten thousand stars  
On them, as pearly dew on spider's web,

The pawky maids !

*Ol.* That's Raoul's banter at my dreams.

*Rao.* Well, oft I've felt this inner touch of things  
When tempests wrestle with the seas and play  
The war-games of the sky, my heart leaps wild  
Until I shout with joy, "ay, this is life!"  
I glory in her storms, and feel my heart  
Grow braver through the strife. But

Let the wild winds rave o'er the hurrying wave,  
And storms tramp to foam the sea,  
And the mountain height frowning dare the fight,  
But the woods and the chase for me, for me,  
The woods and the chase for me.

*Oz.* I shudder at her angry moods. Her rage  
Is terrible. The forests shriek with fear  
As storms tramp down their sons, and tear them  
limb

From limb. The pleading waves flee to the shore  
And groaning die. Raoul, we worship earth!  
Say, do the hills know more than we? They are  
So grand, so calm. Glad summer wins from them  
No smile, nor winter, pelting their bald brows  
With storms, a frown.

*Rao.* What heeds the earth for man's  
Poor joys and cares? The sun with equal eye  
Shines on a battle-field and waving grain.  
The lark will nestle on a murderer's grave,  
Or sing while clans give warriors to their cairn;  
And morn that wakes the flowers awakes the snakes.  
The infant's merry crow reveals the dark  
Retreat of some poor hapless pair, fleeing  
Their burning homes and Norsemen's chain.

Fair smile our vales and steepes,  
When in the nodding flowers  
The sunbeam nestling sleeps  
Through all the summer hours;  
But when the tempest raves,  
And wrecks the hopes of men,  
And crafts sink 'neath the waves,  
What then, my love, what then?

*Rao.* Our sires, good souls,  
Left us their ways ; 'tis ours to follow them.

*Ol.* As our dead fathers did so we must do !  
See with their eyes, hear with their ears, and think  
Their thoughts. The changing future—all was theirs.  
They drank earth's wisdom with their mother's milk  
Till all time's store of wit and worth was theirs,  
And every mother's son since then's a fool.  
As rawlings in the nest, you wait the worm  
Dropped from a dead man's hand. Be dumb, ye  
slaves,

Creep to your tomb and joy you've that sweet friend  
At close of day. Our priests are knaves ; our faith  
A lie !

*Rao.* My Olna, pause ; thin is the ice  
Beneath the feet of jesters 'gainst the priests.  
Heaven, earth and Abred—all are theirs to flay  
Our stubborn hides, till we're as cowed as hounds  
At crack of whip. But there's the evening horn,  
And envious night creeps round  
Wasting day's golden deeds,  
Till daisies their sweet sisters lose  
Among the waste of weeds.

The darkness bids us home. Strange wooing this !  
Angered and shamed by turns, and yet I love  
Thee with a deeper love for thy strange talk.  
I glow with hidden fire ne'er felt before,  
And nobler purpose burns. I feel my worth  
Is less than thine. One kiss, dear maid, my guide,  
My gentle wooer from a selfish life.

[*He kisses her. They leave the hill.*]

## SCENE SECOND.

*Place, THE ALMOID (OR JUSTICE) STONE*<sup>3</sup>;

*Time, 22nd September, 314.*

BORAN, PRIESTS, RAOUL AND OTHERS.

*Choir.* Ye priests the circle trace,  
 Bid flaming altars rise,  
 The willing woods their arms will give  
 To crown our sacrifice.

*Bor. (Arch-Druid, clothed in white, crowned with  
 oak leaves and bearing a sceptre).*  
 Hear ye! Wild snow-drifts lay  
 Deep on the skirts of spring,  
 And hungry wolves laid waste our flocks,  
 And winter cried, "I'm king."  
 The grass forgot the earth,  
 We saw the new-born lambs  
 Stand shivering in the snowy blast,  
 And tug at dying dams.

Spring wept, for few the flowers  
 To wreath her pale young brow,  
 No golden glory clothed the broom,  
 No may, the fairy knowe.  
 Tuatha<sup>4</sup> listless ruled  
 The horses of the sun,  
 No god-might tinkling down the reins  
 To bind their wills his own.

Now autumn's fickle sway  
 Bids rain-clouds o'er us brood,  
 And hunger mocking at our woe  
 Fills all our dreams with food;  
 And sickness wearies death with toils,  
 Till graves turn loathing from his spoils.



*From a Photo by*

*Pettigrew & Amos, Leith.*

THE JUSTICE STONE, HOPETOUN.





*Crowd.* Tuatha, hear and save !

*Bor.* (*resuming*).

Our shores no longer hear  
Glad children's joyous cheer,  
Our homes and hearts are cold ;  
By Drontheim's <sup>5</sup> surging waves  
Our daughters suckle slaves,  
And sons are sold for gold.

*Strome* (*Priest of Ner, <sup>6</sup> god of the sea*).

Ner o'er the trackless deep  
Rides on the raging gales,  
His chariot wheels the billows grind,  
With spray he heaven assails ;  
For our sea-foes he curbs his waves,  
But hurls our sires to briny graves.

*Bor.* (*continuing*). Our prayers fall back from  
heaven, broken and lost,

As waves from cliffs. Wolves fatten on our dead,  
And round the grave a double terror weave.  
The rich bed-fellow want, the poor chide death's  
Slow hand. The dead break through their thrice-  
barred gates

And fill the night with fear. The Pedra glen <sup>7</sup>  
Gives back her sheeted ghosts. 'Neath listening stars  
The murther fronts her lord. His sad, low moan,  
Her mocking laugh or cry of woe have scared  
The wight returning from his toil, and made  
The brave clutch his swift sword—vain brand  
against

Such foes. *These* call for sacrifice to give  
Men peace, and to the dead their rest.

*Choir.* With unfilled arms we reap our grain,

Our foes drink up our blood,  
Our hero-dead mar every plain,  
Like leaves in autumn flood ;  
Their shrieking ghosts,  
Like scattered hosts,  
Cry out for rest in vain.

*Bor.* Gorton, hast thou sought Ner to save?

*Gor.* (*Bard of the Cro Court*<sup>8</sup> *steps forward*).

I stood by our Grey-stone<sup>9</sup>

Thrown by fierce Balor's<sup>10</sup> hand

And heard the ocean moan

Along its rugged strand,

While winds sobbed to the sad complaining sea ;

I cried, "Ner, heal our woe,"

I cut my breast and sighed

As waves groaned out their "No !"

And white-robed, groaning, died ;

Theirs not to save, nor smitten lands to free.

*Bor.* And Tuath, god of winds and sky ?

*Gor.* (*replying*).

I sought Cragdun's<sup>11</sup> bald height,

The frightened winds raved past,

Like deer in maddened flight

From wolves pursuing fast,

Their own sad griefs more than their wings could bear.

The stars were dumb o'erhead,

The clouds fled o'er the sky,

Day to its caverns fled,

And dark night whispered, "die !

Nor burden earth with one more useless tear."

*Bor.* Was Dagda<sup>12</sup> dumb to all thy prayers ?

*Gor.* (*continuing*).

Mists wet my hair. The cold

My strength imprisoned then,

As to the sky I rolled

My groans for earth and men.

Thrice o'er my brow I drew the serpent stone,

And thrice the red blood flowed ;

No food nor drink ; no rest

Upon these limbs bestowed,

To win our gods and their old altars own.

[*A company of priests carrying a large wicker cage draped in white enters the Circle ; the crowd hushing down into painful silence.*

*Bor.* Whence came you, Druan, with your band?

*Druan (Priest of the Hooly Court).* <sup>13</sup>

Last night we met, if haply blest  
To win our gods and purchase rest.  
The hunted deer finds moorland tarn,  
And lapwing's brood the feathery fern,  
The gods to these retreats supply  
But rescue, life to men deny.  
Lost in despair our old men wept,  
For iron heaven stern silence kept ;  
Then Gorton, Cro-stone seer, came there,  
In wolf-skin clad, knees downward, bare,  
With unkempt locks, as he stands now,  
Blood oozing from his furrowed brow ;  
Our hearts beat wild, for boding fear  
Silenced each lip and chained each ear,—

*Bor.* Enough. Gorton, repeat that message now.

*Gor. (stepping forward again).*

A voice me called from earth. Death frowning ope'd  
His gates, I was not his ! I trod his halls  
Paved with the skulls of men ; heard echoes of  
Unfruited hopes and plans, blent with the shouts  
Of victors in the field, fear melting all  
My bones. The gods, like shooting stars, glid through  
Their vasty halls ; their robes of rainbows, girt  
With bands of light, trailed on the toying wind.  
The guilty dead, as hurrying snowflakes flee  
The storm, fled through the air and shrieked with fear.  
Then rose a pyre unbuilt by hands as clouds  
Grow on a spotless sky. Winds sobbed, clouds wept,  
Deep thunders groaned. A light unborn of sun,  
Or moon or star fell there. Darkness, a frown  
Upon his sullen brow, stept back apace,  
As waves from stone dropped in a slumbering lake.  
Hugging the verge of night a ghostly crowd  
Peered through the gloom, fighting their fears to know  
Th' unknown. Then through the air rang loud the  
cry,

"The gods, O earth, are come ! Bring gifts, the gift  
 And giver, one !" The crowd, prone on the ground  
 Fell flat, tore at their hair, and scared the night  
 With wails, as when on battle-field we count  
 Our dead and see the sheaves war's sickle reaps.  
 Fear clutched my heart. My lips, slaves of my soul,  
 Were dumb as warrior dead who sightless gaze  
 Upon the stars, for who would kiss the lips  
 Of death and bid men live ? Then, forth, a maid  
 Whose lithe, proud form had graced a queen and  
 made

Men's hearts her willing slaves. Her eyes, twin stars  
 Of liquid night ; her locks, the raven's hue ;  
 A blush stolen from morn's early dawn suffused  
 Her cheek, and peerless glory graced her step,—  
 A flower too sweet for earth to lose, or heaven  
 Hold off her greedy hand. She sprang upon  
 The pile, with hands to heaven, she cried, "Ye gods,  
 I die and may I be the last !" The torch  
 Applied, then hungry Beal<sup>14</sup> bit the wood,  
 Threw round his flaming arms, hugging the boughs  
 In hot embrace. The green leaves writhed and  
 hissed

And shuddered at his touch. The people's cries  
 Crowded the night, racing to heaven. Then fell  
 A silence still as death. One wrathful flame  
 More eager than the rest, leaped past his peers  
 And clutched her in his arms. No cry, no groan,  
 As down she sank, flames springing to the air  
 In triumph o'er their prey. The thunder ceased,  
 The glad sun filled the sky ; Hu<sup>15</sup> was appeased,  
 Ner calmed, and Balor dumb, great Dagda said,  
 "It is enough." My message (*turning to Boran*)  
 now is thine ;

Go ye, fulfil. [*Gorton leaves the circle and is soon  
 lost in the woods.*]

*Dru.* (*addressing the crowd*).

Stern rose our task ! the gods made cry for blood ;

Some one must die ! With beating hearts we cast  
The lot. One name thrice fell. Fear smote us  
dumb,

That name—sweet Olna of the Glen !

[*Great cries and lamentations among the crowd.*

*A Druidess (chants).*

O sore our gods have smitten  
The hearts and homes of men,  
Our fairest flower they've gathered,  
Sweet Olna of the Glen.  
The children hailed her coming,  
The orphan knew her voice,  
And widows' homes she brightened,  
And made the sad rejoice !

*Priests.* But suns must set and day must die.

*Druidess (continuing).*

No more we'll share her greeting  
At morn or dewy eve ;  
Her sunshine, love and kindness  
To poor, or sinking slave.  
O maids, tear down your tresses,  
And hang your heads, ye brave,  
No marriage songs for Olna,  
Her bridal-bed—a grave !

*Priests.* But winter frowns and flowers must  
die.

*Bor. (addressing Druan).* Have you that heaven-  
claimed gift ?

*Dru.* We found her by the brook,  
A lily pure and fair,  
With breath like may-clad spring  
That glads the morning air.  
With sacred cords we bound  
Her unresisting hands,  
And loosely round her threw  
Our consecrated bands ;  
And now she waits to crown our pyre,  
To win our gods and quench their ire.

*Bor. (to the Ovates<sup>16</sup> or Sacrificing Priests).*

Ye sons of light, present your gift, prepare  
The dance, give voice of horn and shout and song.

*[The Ovates, clad in light green, place the wicker cage on the pile, and, removing the cover, reveal Olua dressed in white. Great distress and excitement among the crowd.]*

*Ol. (looking wildly around).*

Raoul! . . . Raoul! . . . O where art thou?

*[Raoul springing forward with clothes torn, and with face and hair besmeared with blood, confronts the high priest.]*

*Crowd (excited).* Whose bloody work is this?

*Bor. (painfully surprised and confounded).*

Why here, thou crawling vapour of the night?

*Rao. Gadeni,<sup>17</sup>* I've a tale will make your blood  
Run fire, and tempt you tear a false wretch limb  
From limb, and deem his flesh too foul to bait  
Your traps for wolves, and——

*Bor. (curbing strong emotion).*

Speed on, rash youth. I've itching ears.

*Rao. (pale with suppressed anger).*

I'll more than sate thy crave till conscience clothe

Thee in a shirt of hedge-hog skins, their spines

Turned in—*(a pause)*. What day is this? I'm  
wilderer—bear

Till you hear all . . . Enough . . . this notes the  
time:—

Yon moon, which sickle-like hangs in the west,  
Had passed her full, when I in Curnig's glen<sup>18</sup>  
Watched for a wolf. Voices drew near,—a priest  
And Yarll<sup>19</sup> in angry strife. They stopped hard by  
The wizard's putting stones<sup>20</sup> that stubborn breast  
The Garivalt.<sup>21</sup> I heard:—"Thou cur-dog priest  
Thou know'st me well; in calm, willed as a tide  
To reach my aim; in wrath, a demon clothed  
In flesh and blood, and making mountains shake.  
Proclaim a sacrifice! Your gods, not mine!

No, by my father's beard, they are too base  
To kennel with my dogs. Your gods but sneak  
And crawl about the world, like beggars round  
A rich man's gate, and question not how comes  
The dole. A thousand ills, more hungry than  
Our wolves, in very wantonness lay waste  
Our store. Stuff this into the rabble's ear,  
Their hungry maws will answer to your tale ;  
Make Gorton—poor mad wight—a Saga thrum,  
And pat his little soul with soft, sweet words ;  
Mould you his dream ; thy pay, thrice twenty  
steers,

One hundred sheep, Turkbeg, his wife and brats,  
And my strong arm thy shield ; enough to make  
Thy leer mouth grin as wide as fishing-frogs'  
That pest our seas"—(a pause) "Hound, do you  
hear?"—The priest,

"Too well ! Thy hand is iron and thy heart  
A stone." (*The Yarll seizing the priest by the throat,  
and shaking him savagely, cried out*)—

"Wretch, dar'st thou thus to me ! Thy bastard blood  
Grows bold. Bare feet should ware the thorns.  
Silence !

Obey, or in that flood I'll bid thee grope  
Your way to Abred's Caves.<sup>22</sup> That maid . . . must  
. . . die !

I sought—" The winds in anger tore his words  
To shreds, and hurled them to the howling night.  
Then, next—"me friend. How good of petticoats !  
I could have sheathed this dagger in her breast,  
But woman's blood's poor wine for warrior's lips ;  
I leave such mead for mouths like thine. I hate  
The sun that shines on her, the earth she treads,  
The air she breathes ; and till she die, I'll shake  
The sapless bones that rattle in thy skin,  
And haunt thy steps with death. How now, sweet  
priest ?

The Yarll thy foe or her a grave ?" The priest



His hand gave as reply ! They parted then  
 And sought the darkness, and it covered them.  
 Homeward I sped, the prey of rage and fear,  
 Quick action thundering at my throbbing heart.  
 Near Annait's Well <sup>23</sup> a bludgeon struck me down ;  
 Sense fled,—how long is with the gods. I woke  
 Within a hut, four cut-throats guarding me ;  
 Silence or death my choice. Slow were——

*Bor. (interrupting).* How came your faithful serfs  
 To sit at ease these five long days ?

*Rao.* Five days ! Good priest, how knew you this ?  
 The cut-throats, were they in thy pay ?

*A Duntarff Serf.* He said you'd gone to Agwet  
 rock ; <sup>24</sup>

We thought his words were true.

*Rao.* How low thy manhood's sunk ! But I resume.  
 Last night all slept. At dawn a hand dug through  
 The wall. A friend at last ! O priceless joy !  
 My hands, unbound, I forced the door. Rona  
 Was there. Her hand had set me free. A sign  
 She gave. I followed silently. "The woods,"  
 She said, "have ears, have eyes, have hands and feet ;  
 Quick to the Almoid Stone, or woe this day  
 To Binns." With trembling limb and giddy brain  
 I've sought this spot to thwart a crime, and free  
 Our gods from shame.

*[Angry cries among the Crowd, while the  
 Duntarff <sup>25</sup> Serfs gather round Raoul.*

*Bor.* Spawn of the Swamp, <sup>26</sup> beware ! Ill fares  
 the lark

That strikes at passing hawk.

*Rao.* Your worst I dare, for Duntarff's lord knows  
 how

To die but not betray the right. You banned  
 Rolph's spear, but when the wild bull bore  
 Thee bleeding to the ground, *it* bade thee live !  
 You cursed Brawn Dhu,—bade life forsake his lands ;  
 His fields with laughing harvests greet the sun.

The lines of Garth, that old sea-dog, had thy  
Sweet care. The treasures of the deep are his.  
He holds thy curses are good bait for cod  
And ling. Beneath thy smile I'd fear my——

*Bor.* The stripling's mad! Not his to see  
The glory of this maiden's death! Poor boy,  
With manhood hardly budding on his lip,  
Scarce done with kissing his old wrinkled dam  
In childish ravishment. Give him that gaunt  
Crone's wily care, and soon some lovelier maid,  
With rippling sunshine in her face, will weave  
Him dreams of bliss, till in his joy he'll cry,  
"Ye gods, not yours to know a heaven like this!"

*1st Voice.* No hour for jest! Is Raoul's story  
true?

*2nd Voice.* Swear it, Raoul, upon the Almoid  
Stone.

*Rao.* (*springs to the Justice Stone and laying his  
left hand on it, raises his right to heaven.*)

I swear Torgrad's that Yarll, Boran that priest!  
May this right hand be as a withered branch  
In battle-field, these feet be palsied in  
The chase, and children scorn to give my name  
Unto a dog, if truth crowns not my words;  
Great Dagda, hear!

[*A band of men breaks noisily through the  
Circle dragging a struggling captive.*

*Bor.* (*frowning*). Who is this shrieking wretch?

*Cap.* O mercy, mercy! No, no! not the fire!

*Band.* We found him in the Pedra Glen with  
sixty steers and five score sheep. He is a stranger  
and when we questioned him he would not speak.  
We think he is a thief, and therefore we've brought  
him here "to pass the test of fire," and that will  
find his tongue.

*Bor.* The Gallow Court's<sup>27</sup> for knaves like him.

*Crowd.* Off to the Greenan Croft;<sup>28</sup> the test, the  
test!

*Cap.* I'll tell you all! I've done no wrong!

*Bor.* Hound, hold your cursed tongue.

*Cap.* O, yes! sweet priest, I'm dumb; dumb as the grave! Turkbeg can hold his tongue.

*Voices.* Turkbeg! name of the serf! Ay, and the number

Of the sheep and oxen.

*Bor.* Stand back, swineherd, and wait thy doom.

*Cap.* (*wringing his hands*). Sweet friends!

*Crowd.* Hot irons<sup>29</sup> and bare feet! A Drum-caulk<sup>30</sup> dip!

*Cap.* Men, pity me, a stranger here! They're gifts

To our high priest. Is it a crime for serf  
To do his master's will? Fathers, ye know  
A father's care for those who glad your homes;  
Husbands, your help-meets' faithful love; Raoul,  
The anguish of a breaking heart! All these  
Are mine! Why must I die? Why—must—I—  
die?

*Crowd.* Well done, Turkbeg. Truth's in the serf.

*Penvar* (*an aged Druid, head of the Beal-t-lea Court, pressing breathlessly through the Crowd*).

Defend the right! That bright young life (*pointing to Olva*),

Orphaned, alone,—trapped by a villain priest,  
Would make the very dews weep tears of blood.

Shall we thus see her die? No! by the Halls

Of Mists<sup>31</sup> above, and Abred's night beneath,

I dare refuse consent. Ere Gorton gave

His scald, that maid was prisoner. Speak, priest!

Didst thou, born of the living and the dead,

Forecast the die; or didst thou make the Lot

Obeys thy will? We wait thy lips!

*Bor.* Dotard! thy second childhood is thy shield  
Who'd dare to tamper with the Lot?

*Pen.* These are my witnesses (*throwing down the Lot tallies*). All bear one name—that poor, doomed

maid's! You dropped them from your robes. How merciful the gods to her; how just to you——

*A Voice.* How loud the silent gods can speak!

*Pen. (resuming).* What stays the lightning's shafts?  
Do they refuse

To taint their blades in thy base blood? Had I  
The strength that waited once these withered arms,  
Ere that draped sun hid in the west, this earth  
Had been too small to hold us both!

*Bor. (choking with rage and excitement).*

How brave old grey-beards prate. What deeds the  
world

Had owned had youth been skilled to dare as age  
To boast. We'll dream, Penwar, thy hand has  
done

Proud deeds. Perhaps some bard, unborn, may  
weave

Thy name in halting song for children's ears.

Alas! within the Halls of Mists<sup>31</sup> thy sire

Bows his proud head and scorns to own thee son.

*Pen.* Has converse with the gods and shades made  
him

Less noble than when here he taught his son

To scorn a bribe, and dare for right? Alas,

For man, if heaven is but a baser earth!

*[A company of men (the first Christian Missionaries) is seen rapidly approaching.]*

*Crowd.* Strangers! What mean they here?

*A Christian (with earnestness in voice and gesture).*

Men, brothers, stay thy hand!

Love points a nobler way;

A message from a fairer land

I bring this day.

Old memories wake! Long years

I spent in this dear spot;

And these sad woods my longing tears

Have not forgot.

*Bor. (sternly).* Dar'st thou defy our gods, rash man? Thy name——

*Chris.* Morlac of Garivalt. Know'st it?

*Crowd.* Morlac the brave! Right welcome back.

*Priests.* Men, men, your spears. He mocked our gods!

*Garth (the Outcast).* No, no, heaven owned him hers. On sea

The white foam singing kissed his flashing oar;  
In battle-field the gods fought through his arm,  
And broadcast sowed his path with death. The gods  
Think of their sons. I know their tender care.

[*Boran almost frantic, seizing a spear, rushes at Morlac, who, parrying the thrust, clutches the spear and wrenches it out of his hands, amid wild yells and groans from the people.*

*Gar. (the Outcast).* Well done! That's Morlac's way; the gods are with him still.

*Mor. (to Boran).* Wouldst thou another crime add to thy soul?

*Bor.* A crime! The wasters of our flocks we kill,  
What then the wasters of our faith? I hold  
Thee dead—beyond the law's protecting arm.

*Mor. (turning to the people holding up the spear).*  
This spear demands no silent tongue. Prepare  
For shame. In youth I left the chase, save when  
Some wolf laid waste your flocks, then with my  
spear

And Spot, my faithful dog, I'd free your fields.  
I sought the 'Why' of toil and blasted fields?  
Of unopened lilies snapped in joyous spring;  
The pains that shadow joy; the loves of hell,  
The hates of heaven? Were good and evil but  
Twin offspring of our neighbour-life, moulded  
For passing times; their first and last in us?  
Was death a step 'tween life and life, and where  
The haven for the drifting voyager;  
Or perished we as smoke upon the breeze?

Did fate enthrall the gods as they, our lot?  
 Would all things perish in some far-off night,  
 Whose morn would find creation's blots away?  
 And would new gods and men, new sun and stars  
 Re-people space—a glorious spring, a seer  
 Of greater springs and falls, of life and death  
 Through all the endless years? These scourged my  
 thoughts,

Mocked all my cries and made a strong man fear.  
 I joined your priests, but Boran shook my soul,  
 "Ha, ha! good sir, the dead? their lives? They  
 have

Forgotten speech. We know no more than our  
 Blind dupes. We fool them to their bent. They  
 wish

It so, and 'tis a royal life to lead."

I scorned the man; my better nature loathed  
 His creed. Cold grew my welcomes at their courts,  
 Yet feared they cast me out; I knew too much!

*Voices.* What did you know? Why should they  
 fear?

*Mor.* Where is poor Olua's father's grave?

*Priests.* Deep in the White Picts' sea.<sup>32</sup>

*Mor.* Who set his boat adrift 'mid night and storm  
 To make the story of a watery grave?  
 Has Drumcaulk's tarn no tale to tell? Hard is  
 The death-strife there,—a cry, piercing the night,  
 Scaring the ravens in their dreams,—a plunge,  
 And all is still, save one stern voice, "That's one  
 Step nearer Binns; and, Boran, where wert thou?  
 A grave, *the Good Folks'* land<sup>33</sup> supplied. His  
 sword,

His ring rest with him there. That spot——

*A Voice.* Boran, make Morlac shew the grave!

*Mor.* I claim that test. Earth knows no bribes.  
 He's dumb!

Crime seals men's lips. He dares not question  
 earth.

What was poor Olna's only brother's fate?

*Priests.* Killed by a hunter's mis-directed spear.

*Mor.* Too well directed spear. Boran set me  
That dastard task. I feigned unwell and warned  
Him of his nearing fate. His dying words,  
"O, Morlac, and thy love in vain." What left——

*A Voice.* Yes, these his words. They have a  
meaning now.

*Mor. (continuing).* One step now 'tween the  
Yarll and Binns. He sought  
Her (*pointing to Olna*) hand in vain. Her dead  
and her own heart,  
Instinct with all a woman's fear, forbade  
Her suckling offspring of the man who'd dug  
Her father and her brother's grave!

[*The Crowd becomes wild with excitement, but at the  
command of Boran they calm a little.*]

*A Priest.* You fled our Courts; slave of the  
coward heel!

*Mor.* O blundering priests! See Boran's white-  
set lips,

His face one agony. You pierce his heart.  
Could he but tear your witness-tongues from out  
Your 'wildered pates he'd bless his gods for one  
Whole moon. Yes, fled; let Boran answer, why?  
While Yule-log burned and round hung mistletoe,<sup>34</sup>  
"The plant of peace," 'mid song and jest, a cup  
He, smiling, placed within my hands. A guest  
Gave me a sign. Spell-bound, I stood, I saw  
The murderer gleaming in his cruel eye.  
With maddening fury leaping through my veins  
Down at his feet I dashed the cup, hissed in  
His ear, "baffled, base wretch," and fled.

*Priests.* And who that noble friend?

*Mor.* And loose a pack of wolves fierce at his heels!

*Priests.* Ya, ha! the cur shrinks from his lie.

*Pen. (stepping forward; Boran, dazed, standing in  
silence).* 'Twas Boran filled that poison-cup. My soul

Rose at the crime. I loved the brave, kind youth.  
 I gave that sign and Morlac lives, and glad  
 These aged eyes to see him here this day—  
 A day of darkness, crime and shame.

*[Mingled cries, groans and angry shouts from the Crowd.]*

*Bor.* Ovates, priests, the torch, the torch !

*[At that moment the clouds break and a strong flood of sunshine bursts forth.]*

*Mor.* *(springing between the priests and the pile).*

Back, back ! that sunburst as a very voice  
 From God, proclaims her free. The shadow's past  
 The sacrificial mark.<sup>85</sup> Another sun,  
 Even by your law, must rise ere she can die !

*Rao.* *(who had been gathering a band for a rescue).*  
 Help, help ! My Olna save !

*[He rushes to the pile supported by his retainers and the serfs of Binns—men almost frantic at the thought of losing so good a mistress, and many others. A fierce struggle follows and many are beaten down bleeding to the ground. They force back the priests and Cragdun serfs, tramp out the torches, rescue Olna and bear her fainting into the midst of her friends, and then turn and front Boran amid the wildest uproar.]*

*Priests* *(smiting their breasts and tearing their hair).*

Bring back the sacrifice ! O godless hands !  
 The gods will curse our land ! o-ru, o-ru !

*Gar.* *(in mocking tones).* O pity our poor gods, o-ru !  
 Give Boran, sighs ; the Yarll, great tears of blood !  
 Will none avenge their nerveless hands ? O-ru !

*Bor.* *(covering his head, the priests following his example, a deep silence falling on the Crowd).*

Morlac ! Morlac ! Morlac ! "The sword is naked  
 against thee.<sup>86</sup> Be thine the greater outcast's doom ;  
 no food, no shelter thine. Let no hand moist thy



dying lips ; none see thee die ; and earth refuse to thee a grave ; and let the hand that breaks this curse share all its woes ! ”

*Mor.* I when a child would whip the sea, daring  
To wash some castle down, my little hands  
Had built ; then pause, but while I watched, the waves  
Wiped out the scars, and poured their brave old song  
To listening shores. As fell my lash so fall  
Thy threats. Here must Messiah reign alone !  
But to my tale :—I fled, for life is sweet,  
And journeying west, I found this faith. Its words  
Were hope and life ! My soul pulsed with a love  
Unfelt before. I longed to lead these men  
To this dear spot where childhood dawned, and all  
My fathers sleep ; and now——

*[Two horsemen with a boar-hound are seen galloping furiously towards the Meeting.]*

*The Crowd.* The Yarll, the Yarll ! his hound.  
What next ?

*Bor.* *(to Morlac with triumph in his countenance).*  
Now for thy doom ! Swift falls the blow the gods  
Direct. They'll have their sacrifice. I see  
That hound, their priest, his white teeth in thy throat ;  
Too good a death for such a mangy cur.  
*(Then turning to Raoul)* Flee for thy life  
While yet there is escape.

*Ol.* *(clutching at Raoul).*

O give me death but not that man !

*Rao.* *(to Olna).* Be brave ; stand still !

*Voices.* He's thrown ! he's thrown ! help, help !

*[Many run off to the fallen Yarll. They find him dead, a stranger by his side. They are kept at bay by the fierceness of the hound. A well-aimed blow fells it to the ground. They then lift the dead body and silently return (the dog recovering, follows moaning and whining behind), and lay it at the Arch-Druid's feet.]*

*The Crowd (in whispers).* He's dead! Be dumb, the gods are very near. He's in the black silences of death!

*Bor. (trembling with emotion and wringing his hands).* O patron, friend! Not dead? O speak but once!

What means this day? Has heaven forsaken me?  
As sinking swimmer fights the endless waves  
With ever weakening stroke, so fight I now!  
Alone, I stand as stag 'mong hungry wolves,  
Whose red tongues lick their cruel jaws. Where now—

*The Stranger (interrupting).* Hear me. From Cragdun Hill the Yarll watched for the smoke. Your rites concerned me not. He paced the grass, his aspect terrible, and through his teeth he ground his words deep—broken—slow. I caught them but as crumbs of speech:—"Not yet,—played false? I'll brain the wretch,—and Duntarff's hounds escaped,—I'll know the How! My lash will argue with his keepers' backs—red rain the answer to its voice! Not yet? 'Tis almost noon! By Hu! Drumcaulk can drown a priest as well's a Breir. To horse, to horse!" We mount and hereward ride at break-neck speed. But why go on? You saw the rest. His horse missed foot; he fell, nor spoke nor breathed, and these good folks with gentle hands have borne him reverently unto your feet. I go to bear the sad news to his home. (*He leaves.*)

*The Cut-throats (aside).* Our backs are safe; a sweet drop in our cup for once. Ay, ay! his broken neck is our whole skin!

*Bor. (bracing himself up).* My dead friend there Hath for a moment made me weak. Remove Him home. Yet sooth, him touch with tender care, He was a Yarll and strong. Now, Morlac, speed Your lying tale.

*Mor.* Bold, heartless man! The murdered from their graves

Cry out. Von hemlock cup hath found a tongue,  
And this day's thwarted crime, and these dead lips  
(*pointing to the body*) What speak they to thy soul?

*Bor.* I'm here as priest, as priest I speak and act,  
Naught else; nor you my judge. Our gods rule not  
From human good or ill, as suns heed not  
The storms that scour the sky. One falling leaf  
Leaves not the forest bare.

*Mor.* But it may herald winter nigh.

*1st Voice.* Have done this talk! Our dance and  
song!

*2nd Voice.* Pitch on the priest; off with him to  
the Yarll.

*3rd Voice.* On with the Esk!<sup>87</sup> Who, first, a leg?  
[*A wild rush for the priest is made in which  
the Yarll's body is much trampled upon,  
the dog defending it furiously. Boran  
takes refuge among the Christians, call-  
ing upon them to save him. Morlac,  
Raoul, and others with difficulty restrain  
the people who accuse the priest of cruelty  
and injustice in the Law-Courts, sub-  
serviency to the rich, and neglect of the  
poor.*]

*Mor.* A godlike deed is yours this day,—restored  
Us one who lived to bless. The poor were hers!  
When sorrow made you weak, her hands were thine,  
Were brother, sister, mother's all in one!  
No stain must mar this hour. Forget the Yarll;  
We dare not judge. Whate'er of good was his,  
That good remember now——

*A Voice.* An easy task. His hound alone will  
mourn

His death. What of the bloody priest?

*Mor.* Let Olna give her voice.

*A Voice.* Yes! let her judge! She bore the wrong  
—half through the gates of death. [*Cries for Olna.*]

*Ol.* (*advancing amid cheers in her sacrificial robes,*

*leaning on Raoul's arm, the Cragdun serfs standing sullenly by*). My joy at my escape,—life from your hands,— my Raoul's love, choke words. My, my—*(she bursts into tears,—a pause, then in broken accents)*—Accept . . . these . . . tears . . . my thanks; and for that man (*pointing to Boran*), let him alone, his own dread thoughts . . . his . . . punishment.

*1st Voice.* He'll hold us fools to throw our chance away.

*2nd Voice.* Give us our holiday. Roast the old Esk.

*3rd Voice.* No, no! The adder's fangs are drawn.

*4th Voice.* Down with the altar! Down, our shame!

*The Crowd (with wild cries).* Down with our shame!

[*They rush to the pile and tear it down amid the cries of—*"THIS OUR LAST SACRIFICE!"

*Mor.* Now to your homes. Ask, may not God, our God,

Be better than you deem? To-morrow, here,

At noon and from that Almoid Stone, I'll tell

Of one—a Sacrifice—whose matchless love

Undying yearns for you.

*The Christians sing.*

Awake glad songs of praise

To our Redeemer, King,

O guide us, Lord, Thy Cross to raise

And fruitful service bring;

O lead these darkened lands to Thee,

Break Thou their bonds and set them free.

[*The crowd in noisy groups slowly disperse, greatly excited and bewildered at the events of the day. The Cragdun serfs, at the same time, remove the dead Yarll to a conveyance which has been sent from Cragdun.*

## SCENE THIRD.

COUNCIL HALL, AEBERCURNIG ;<sup>38</sup>

23rd September, 314.

*Bor. (alone, waiting the assembling of the Court).*

Fallen ! Life's mask torn off, the altar razed,  
The Yarll, a grave, and Olna heiress of  
Cragdun, and I— ! Ye gods, why now so dread,  
So dark ? O death ! what demon lurks behind  
Thy gates, scaring my soul to force the latch  
And baffle all my foes ? When yesternorn  
Laid golden hands on crag and dale, how fair  
Earth stood—a blushing bride waiting the sun,  
Her lord, to crown her queen of day. The clouds  
Forgot their tears, and snowy fringes wove  
Around their robes. The sea, lost in a dream,  
Lay listening to the steps of maiden morn,  
And toying with the shells silvering the strand  
And gently murmuring, rocked himself to sleep.  
Then east winds, dark with mists, wiped out the sun  
And seized the sky. So stood I then, clothed round  
With might our Rights<sup>39</sup> scarce dared, and earth-lords  
feared,

While clodpoles trembling kissed my feet, and deemed  
A kick a jest—a rougher favour from  
The gods ! But now ! the meanest serf would hold  
Me butt for his dull wit, nor house me with  
His dogs. My victims haunt my path. The wind  
Has learned their sighs, the sea their dying groans.  
The timid tenants of the air and field,  
With quickened haste, flee my approach. They see  
With keener eye the ghosts that haunt my steps,  
And fear with almost human fear. I shun  
The day and dread the night. The air has found  
A tongue, and mocking demons whisper, "Come !  
We wait you on the further shore." I start,

Gaze round, and shudder at my fears. O would  
 They voice the end, I then could——

[*A wild, sad voice is heard without.*]

O where's my boy, my darling boy?

*Bor. (shuddering).* That cry! O, will it never cease?

[*Enter Members of the High Court.*]

*Bor. (aside).* One more sharp hour and life's dark  
 tale is told.

*Pen. (addressing Boran by direction of the Court).*

Our gods are in the dust! Forget thyself

In honour of our fathers' faith, that our

Last memories of thee may win a tear.

Know, guilt confessed, smoothes half the way to  
 heaven.

*Bor. (pale and agitated).* I've filled the cup fate  
 presses to my lips,

My sowings now return their sheaves. Slave of  
 That Yarl whose ghost steals through the Halls of  
 Mists,

My lot. He found me poor and through it slew  
 The man. One crime was mine; he held the proof,  
 And merciless as eagle's claws his grip.

The just man's sword was broken in my hand.

I sank from guilt to guilt. Each new crime blotted  
 out

The old, as spring-tides trace of former flows.

*Life* weights the lash of death, pillows the grave

With thorns, and hells the soul. O innocence!

When mine, then joyous day and unfear'd night,

Unprized till lost, as men whose sightless eyes

Once knew the sun, now in their noon-day night

Know all his worth too late. 'Tis past, 'tis well!

My sun is set. No dawn hides in my east.

To-day 'mid floods of light, as if the gods

Were glorying in their fall, this Morlac meets

The Crowd. No more for me the cry, "The gods,

The gods!" (*a long pause*). By Hu! Is't all a dream,  
 a cheat

Upon our unguessed fears? I'm done with gods  
And men. The first I dare. Ya, ha! What know  
We of our gods, or they of us?

*Swarff (Priest of the Gallow Court).* The gods are  
thundering through thy quivering speech;  
The voices of thy face shame all thy words.  
Though death blows out the lamp, the life goes on.  
That hollow laugh is but the murderer's trick  
To brace him 'neath the gallow tree.

*Bor.* Well, man I scorn. He can but bid me sleep,  
And sleep is pleasant at the close of day.  
Grant me a broken man's request. As sinks  
The castaway in ocean's wastes, so let  
Me sink. Let no man know my——Farewell!

*[He wraps his mantle hurriedly about him and  
leaves the Court. The Druids, in obedience  
to his wish, do not follow him.]*

*Pen.* And this his end—the night, friendless,  
alone,

And guilty memories. Ye gods, protect  
Our feet, we, too, are men! Our guide has played  
The serpent in the grass, and bit the heel  
Of passer-by. Like leaking bark our faith  
Lies water-logged. Men cry for light, and we  
In deepening darkness grope. What is your voice?

*Brockdhu (Prospective High Priest).*

When summer clothes the earth with laughing flowers  
Dipped in the rainbow's hues, and birds  
Make wild the woods with love and song,

Our hearts rejoice;

When winter treads earth's glories down, and shakes  
The last sere leaf from forest tree,

We hear the voice of conquering death

And bow our heads;

When war's fierce voice rings through our fatherland,  
And Fortha's waves are black with fleets,  
And hearth and home cry out for aid,

We clutch our arms;

So when our gods, more dear than home and love,  
And our high altars are thrown down,  
And tossed as wrack on surf-beat shore,  
Let us arise,  
New altars rear. Stern ills stern cures demand,  
Bid Morlac die, and in his death  
This milk-and-water creed will fade,  
As does a dream.

*Sw.* Is yesterday forgot? Its hours were years!  
Seas roll 'tween it and *now* too deep to wade,  
Too broad to swim. Morlac proclaims a *light*.  
Perhaps some pitying god has forced the bars  
That prison truth. We grope for day;

A bettered world must be our crave,  
And leave to earth more than a grave.

*Brock.* All truth is ours; what need we more?

*Sw.* Our sires first sat on stones; then kindly sods  
Lent better aids; and now the friendly wood;  
And where the end? The years *that* secret keep.  
In youth I trimmed my skiff as did my sires;  
Now, see! While you creep round the bays, my boat  
Leaps 'neath the breeze, and with her outspread wings  
Plays with the gale. My axe is keener than  
My sire's. My fields send fairer burdens home.  
Each day is larger than its yesterday.  
Our wants flog us to higher aims. No eve  
Waits *Onward's* steps. An everlasting morn  
Is hers. The years add wisdom to the wise;  
We grow to grow. Our faith may have attained  
Its task; its old age come, to sink into the past,  
Whose gates give no return; and this new Faith  
May speak of fairer skies and hope to man.

*Brock. (mockingly).* O sweet your song! I'll sing  
your dream:—

The winter now forgets his snows,  
The snake his venom'd fangs,  
The stream all crystal water flows,  
And hunger hath no pangs.



The wolf eats grass, the thundering boar  
Moves peaceful life along,  
And hawks, dove-eyed, with larks now soar,  
And flood the air with song.

The storms lie hushed within their caves,  
The lightnings never smite,  
The boats now play with toying waves,  
No terror hath the night ;  
The briar and thorn now hide their head,  
And ruthless death itself is dead.

*Sw.* Add this, and round thy song.

Rejoice, rejoice, the hour is near,

Ye gods, O haste the day !

When stand-still guides will disappear,

Like ocean's drifting spray.

Our dark, inconstant gods are dumb. They——

*Brock.* "Inconstant gods !" Here's treason in our  
camp.

*Sonar (Priest of the Cro Court).* The new is ever  
treason to the old. Speak, Swarff,

We heed the silent might of deep, still floods  
More than the babblement of shallow brooks.

*Sw.* I say "inconstant gods." As bends the tree  
To every blast, so bend our gods to priest  
Or Yarll. When Gloe was priest, no human blood  
Was shed. Were they asleep? Thirty long years !  
Ye gods, a goodly nap, worthy a god !  
Morven, the fierce, had ten. Did then our gods  
Wake up with hungry chops, and cry for food ?  
Boran had once a maid, two aged crones  
And one poor waif ! O hapless sex ! Our gods  
Hold thee a dainty for their feasts ! And next,  
A stranger and a widow's son ; and where  
That widow now ? These gloomy woods her home,  
Her grey hair tossing in the gale, and rags  
Her scanty covering. With clouded mind  
And woes too deep for tears, she ever asks

The pitying woods, "O where's my boy? He is Not dead!" and mourning echoes answer "dead!"

*Brock.* Heed you the ravings of a witless hag,  
As if no mother ever lost a son?

*Sw.* O meet successor to our spotless priest!

[*Enter Druids from Morlac's Meeting.*]

*Pen.* We've longed for your return. What news?

*Dru.* We met Morlac and Thune, and crowds filled with

A strange expectancy. And first a song;  
The surging crowds grew still, thrilled with its words  
Of tenderness and love. A simple tale,—  
A shepherd's care for one lost sheep; and while  
They sang we felt we were the lost. How strange  
That soft, sweet song to all our noise and blasts  
Of horn. This was its close:—

"He found it helpless, far from home,

He pressed it to his breast,

'The lost is found! rejoice, O friends,

The wanderer has rest.'"

The aged Thune then prayed. No tearing hair,  
No smiting breasts; he spoke as child unto  
A father near. But when he mourned o'er sin  
These hands fell trembling by my side, I saw  
Myself and feared. He spoke of God made man,  
Dead on a cross, an empty grave, a throne  
In heaven, and earth his tender care. What more——

*Brock.* Good sooth! You mouth it well; your  
heart has heard

As well's your ears. Ye blind! "God on a cross!"  
This beats our maddest gods, e'en in their cups!

*Dru.* Why might not God such godlike pity shew?  
God dying on a Cross for me would crush  
My dearest sin. I'd clasp his blessed feet,  
And weep my life away in grateful tears.

*Brock.* Things do look hopeful for our gods.

"Care, love!"

What of the rains ; Ner riding on the storms,  
The waves his foaming steeds, and in his glee  
Pelting 'the stars with spray, until in fear  
They hide behind the skirts of night ?

*Dru.* He prayed :—If famine smote, the rich  
would rise,

Baffle clean teeth, and bid the poor man live.

*Clutha (Priest of the Beal-t-lea Court).* The curse  
of Balor first ! My wealth to feed  
The cur-dog throng ! I count them fruit to 'dorn  
Our gallow-tree. They grace it well !

*Sw.* But what of yesterday and that dead Yarl ?

*Tobar (Priest of Tuatha).* But this :—"Forget  
the past as flowers the night !"

I watched him as a mountain cat his prey ;  
But he disarms our wrath, grasps at our hearts,  
Weaves, growing on, his theme as spring her robes  
From melting snows. His dark eye swept the crowd  
As eagle's sweeps a moor. He strikes men dumb.  
When one dared for our gods, he'd take some rite—  
Child of our Faith—and flash, in scathing light,  
Its hideousness, while crimson dyed our cheek.  
He told of one lost son in rags and shame  
Returning to his father's house, seeking  
A serf's low place ; that when the father saw  
Him from afar, he had compassion, ran,  
Fell on his neck and kissed his son. The lad,  
Claiming no more the right of son, was stopped ;  
The glad, old man cried, "bring him robes and shoes  
And ornaments," till sorrow, gratitude,  
And love pulsed all that young, sad, bleeding heart.  
That son, that day, a second time was born  
Unto his sire ! The people sobbed aloud,  
And strong men dashed away the mastering tear,  
And children clapped their hands in very joy  
At all the father's dear forgiving love.  
That father, Morlac's God, and we that son !

*Pen.* That's like a god. My heart went out to that

Old man. In thought I kissed his robe, for he  
Has taught me to forgive.

*Gawin (Priest of Dwy Vach).*<sup>40</sup>

What loyal priests ! What lusty braves !

What skalds our bards will sing,

In burning strains your feats of arms

Against this Morlac's king !

The very gods will fear their bays

Will wither 'neath your flaming praise !

*Strome (Priest of Ner).* Earth answers to his call.

He voices all

Our wants. Children<sup>41</sup> creep near in glad surprise,

And whisper oft, "no wicker baskets now !"

And as we hear, our gods grow dim and fade

As stars at dawn. The blow of yesterday

Has smitten thought, and questioning silence is

Its awful eloquence.

*Gaw.* Why not rank Jesu 'mong our gods, Morlac  
His priest, with house and votive gifts ?

*Dru.* Morlac holds but one God, and none  
besides.

*Clu.* Weigh ye the loss this creed implies ? I  
waive

The gods. Our homes, our lands, free toil, fire-gelt,

Yule gifts, the ease and honour of our lot ;

The rich fawn at our feet—as stepping-stones

To higher power. Their well-dowered daughters  
wait

Our beck to drop as ripened fruit into

Our marriage net. And will you these forego

And play the fool ? What then our lot ?

Druan be milkmaid to grim Altcath's<sup>42</sup> laird,

Strome gather fisher's bait, and Penwar tend

The Duntarff swine, and Swarff could beg ; his locks  
Would plead for him !

*Pen.* And Clutha hangman at the Gallow hill.

*Sw.* So be it, Clutha ; Want, but no false faith.

*Clu.* Ay, Swarff, stickler for right at close of life !

Were twenty summers thine once more, how in  
 The face of some old sage you'd smile and pat  
 His poor, bald pate and whisper,—“Time enough,  
 Old man. You've emptied pleasure's cup, and now  
 You envy my young powers to quaff its wine;  
 But when my toothless jaws but jabber, then  
 I'll lecture fiery youth as you now me.

*Son.* Why, by the gods! clutch ye each other's  
 throats

As if the cause were yours? Our gods cry out,  
 And *angry strife* is your reply. Do braves  
 Smite comrades in the day of blood? Bid hate  
 And anger sleep. The day demands our all!  
 Tell me, who dared strong for our gods this day?

*Voin* \* (*Keeper of Annait's Well*). I dared, and  
 these my words:—“Our sires gave us  
 Our Faith learned from the gods. The mighty dead  
 Met them in dreams; revealed the Halls of Shells,<sup>31</sup>  
 And Abred's restless night, its deathless death.  
 Some gods, free-handed, bless our struggling race,  
 Smile in the sunshine, sing in songs of birds,  
 Pour harvests o'er the plain, and carpet earth  
 With grass, gladdening our flocks and herds. Some  
 blast

Our homes, as frosts the autumn leaves, sow deaths,  
 Dig graves, and squeeze the life-joys from our heart.  
 We stay their wrath by gifts and sacrifice.  
 (He's blest who can forget, or steel his breast  
 Against the love of friend.) Their life one war,  
 Each holding but his own with doubtful hand.  
 The gods of eve oft mock the gods of morn,  
 And man the ball at their contending feet.  
 At death—life's second step—the base sink back  
 To beast to learn—if haply wise—with hard,  
 Sealed lips a nobler life. We've startled, seen  
 A human face gleam for a moment through

\* The writer's object in Voin's address is to show some of the  
 beliefs of the Druids. Interesting they are in many ways.

A beast's, lending a fierceness or a fear  
To nature's work. The crafty fox, indwelt,  
Will craftier grow. The smitten hound will gaze  
With eyes longing for tears to plead for him,  
And hate malign burn in the crawling snake.  
Our hero-dead roam through the Halls of Shells—  
Their steps like beat of waves on rocky shore—  
Play war as sport, their steeds the wind, their shouts  
The roar of waterfalls. When darkness wrapped  
The earth and souls whose memories would not die,  
Roamed troubled through the night, I've trembling  
joyed

To hear their steeds rush through the moaning woods  
Like horsemen on the foe. At their high feasts  
They tell of their old feuds and fights, where swords  
Held lusty argument ; of fields wet with  
Red rain—the warriors' land-marks through the  
years—

Their steps shaking the ground, while gods looked on  
With bated breath, and owned them kings of men.  
They tell of baffled deaths ; of lone grey cairns,  
And smile as men do at their boyhood's strife.  
Or songs of love ; the winning of their brides  
By raid and sword—a merry wooing, short  
And sharp—the mighty Halls resounding with  
Brave time-beats on their sounding shields. I'll go  
To them, meet them just as of yore and quaff  
With them the mead of gods. The gods, perhaps,  
Will visit us, laugh at our roistering joys,  
As loving sires at games that please their brats.  
My father will me meet ; tell all he's learned  
Since first he pressed the latch of death, and groped  
His way to broader light. In him my heaven !  
And should I meet my darling wife who made  
Me all I am, my little Rose, and Troon,  
My faithful dog, my joy would be complete.  
My father's Faith will serve my father's son."

*[Cheering from the Court.]*

*Brock.* Right nobly said ! But twenty hearts like  
thine,

Then short the shrive for all this beggar crew.  
How took the crowd thy speech ?

*Voin.* As wasps around some luckless wight, they  
buzzed

And stung with jeer and gibe. With cruel tongue,  
'Mid noisy laughter thrown between, they dared  
To question me ! the brocks, the hogs ! whose backs  
Were honoured were they flayed by my old staff :—  
"Where had the dead Yarll gone ? To Abred's caves?  
Or housed he now in bear or wolf ; in one  
Or in a pack ; one were too small for his  
Fierce soul ? Why did the water-test aye end  
In death ? Did serf e'er see the airy Halls  
Of Shells ? Shared they the god-mead as the rest ?  
Were they serfs still with bloody stripes for pay ?  
Why shone the sun so bright and Olna free ?  
Why did no priest e'er grace the pile ? Why let  
We Boran free ?—Enough ! Their questions fell  
As thick as wintry hail. I shook with wrath ;  
I cursed the swinish throng, bade Balor give  
Them all his tender care, and left in rage,  
Their laughter, as a death-dirge, crashing on  
My startled ear. Hear then——

[*Enter one of the Ovates.*

Fathers, hear ! Shame hunts our cause to death and  
we are helpless 'neath black Boran's crime.  
Last——

*Brock.* Stop. Here you have no voice. What  
brought you here ? Who gave you leave to speak ?

*Ovat.* I bow before your Court. Last night Raoul  
and Morlac, with ten serfs from Binns, entered the  
"Good Folks' land." "Dig here," said Morlac,—  
"this the grave !"

*Brock.* They've ope'd the grave !

*Ovat.* Yes, and found a skeleton with proofs of  
hasty burial,—a sword, a dirk, ornaments, a ring and

hunting horn, all property of the late Brier of Binns.  
That chief now sleeps at Binns among his sires. (*He bows and leaves the Hall.*)

*Brock.* Our cause is desperate. Here's my resolve:—

Tramp out this lie; give Morlac to the flames,  
And Thune to fire the pile!

*Pen.* The gods forbid. I'll hear before I judge.  
Like sea-bird 'gainst a storm we strive in vain.  
Men cry for light; we cannot meet their crave,  
And fire is sorry argument. My voice  
Is—Watch and wait.

*Many voices.* Penwar is right. Agreed! Agreed!

*Brock.* Then, hear:—I break allegiance with your Court.

Wait on your doom. I'll win the faithful round,  
Hurl Morlac to his fate, and whip the curs  
That dare not now bark at his heels. Farewell,  
Ye faithful sons of our old creed!

[*He leaves with Clutha, Gawin, Voin and others, amid cries of "Off for your Whip!" The Council resolves to attend Morlac's meetings, discuss questions with him, and by house to house visitations to foster the old Faith.*]

#### SCENE FOURTH.

*Place,* BINNS;

*Time,* 25th October, 314.

*Thune (An aged Missionary).*

Joy fills this day! Raoul and Olna wed  
In holy love. Raoul, a noble life  
Be thine. Be just, with mercy sunning all  
Thy deeds. Counsel with age and worth; the depths  
And shoals of life are theirs. Years have a wit



Youth cannot buy. Enslave the heart by love !  
 Strong throbs the pulse where gratitude impels ;  
 And count a smile a nobler sight than tears.  
 At dawn let Duntarff call to Binns, " Arise  
 And bless." At eve let Binns reply, " Some tears  
 Are dried, and earth is stronger through our hands."  
 Thus build thy cairn in grateful hearts of men.

And thou, our Olna, twice escaped from death—  
 Of faggot and of sin ; live, daughter, for  
 Thy risen Lord, and in that love Raoul  
 Will thrice be blest !

*Ol. (bending down under deep emotion).* Give  
 me thy blessing, Thune.

*Th.* I will, my child (*laying his aged hand upon  
 her head*):—"The Lord bless thee and keep thee ;  
 the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be  
 gracious unto thee ; the Lord lift up his countenance  
 upon thee and give thee peace." (*Numbers, chap. vi.,  
 24-26.*)

*A Voice.* O beautiful ! Our sires knew no such  
 words.

Our bones are water as we search our past.

*Ol. (rising and taking Thune's arm).* Now to  
 the Banquet Hall where wait our guests.

[*They enter amid cheers from the guests.*  
*After dinner, four little girls, dressed in  
 white, sing.*

Bridal day ! bridal day !  
 Loudly sing, blessings bring,  
 Marriage joys fire all our lay.  
 Raoul now with Olna wed,  
 Troubles past and dangers fled,  
 Darkness gone and light instead ;  
 I-o ! rejoice !

Sound the shells, sound the shells,  
 Duntarff hears Binns' glad cheers,  
 On the breeze our glad shout swells.

Love has witching tender wiles,  
Winning both with tears and smiles,  
And the youthful heart beguiles ;  
I-o ! rejoice !

Night's away, night's away,  
Morning breaks, day awakes,  
Start the echoes with our lay,  
Teach the hills proud Raoul's fame,  
And the woods sweet Olna's name,  
In one glad and loud acclaim ;  
I-o ! rejoice !

Hopeful day, hopeful day,  
May its fire ne'er expire,  
Wedlock blessings with them stay ;  
No dark sorrow cloud their fate,  
No wild foeman smite their gate,  
Peace and love upon them wait ;  
I-o ! rejoice !

Joyous light, joyous light,  
Love new-born greets the morn,  
Smiles with gladness in our sight ;  
Children now shake off their fear,  
Youths and maidens bless the year,  
Christ has come ! Christ is here !  
I-o ! rejoice !

*Rao.* Proud hour for me. Here those who daring  
won

My Olna's freedom and their own. Night's past !  
The dawn has set her banner on the hills,  
The valleys wait her footsteps down the slopes,  
And streams will weave her message into song.  
I meet here servants hoar,—old gnarled oaks,  
Staid matrons and blythe maids, stour sires, and sons  
Worthy such sires, and widows lone who wish

Their gone-befores were here to round their joy ;  
 And children filled with romping glee, matching  
 The very dogs in wantonness of fun.  
 My wider sway cries "wider claims." My life  
 Shall answer them and fruit the promises  
 I pledge you now.

*Pen. (under deep emotion).* Respect an old man's  
 tears. The past is like  
 A horrid dream. We vow it *No return !*  
 Our bonds are broken ; Christ has made us free !  
 We here renounce our Fathers' Faith.

*[Upwards of twenty priests and lay members  
 of the different Courts and all the remaining  
 guests join in the renunciation.]*

*Mor.* As mother clasps her child  
 Clutched from the wave, so I'd embrace you all.  
 Now Christ is known, the way of pardon seen,  
 And pardon teaches to forgive. Life waits  
 Your hands. Love lives in living love. The flowers  
 That throng our path breathe tidings of God's  
 care ;

The larks at gates of morn send night away  
 In song ; the dew the cup of pity holds  
 To fainting flowers ; the rose sheds on the air  
 Good-will to men ; the day more oft gives smiles  
 Than tears, and night puts on her sable brow  
 A thousand stars ; and sleep wipes out our cares  
 And braces for new——

*[Enter a woman in rags, with long dishevelled  
 hair, and a wild searching look in her eye.]*

*Guests (much moved).* Rona ! Rona !

*Rona.* I heard your shouts of joy. How strange  
 they beat

Upon an empty heart ; voices of youths  
 And maids. I said, "He will be here, my boy !  
 First in the dance nor last in song." O come,  
 My child ! Why flee my love ? My heart is wild  
 To feel thy clasp once more. The summer comes,

Why not my boy? He's here! Where is my child?

[*Giving a wild searching look around. Raoul rises to go to her, but Morlac bids him wait.*

Rona. O where's my boy? You hide him from my breast!

O mothers, help me seek my boy! Rona  
Would weary day and tire the night to give  
You back some lamb.—(*She sees Raoul*), Ah, Raoul  
lives!

Ya, ha! that hand (*stretching out her right hand*)  
has cunning yet hid in

Its withered skin. Fair was it once and strong!  
The lurking gillies saw not Rona near  
The well. The woods all talk to me. The birch's  
Low shiver sighs o'er some dark shame. The beech  
Has secrets in its whispering leaves. The birds  
Leave tidings on the air. The ravens tell  
Of murdered dead. Owls bid me fear. Peesweets  
Of troth betrayed. All bade me watch that night  
As silent as the stars. I saw Raoul—  
The blow—the hut—the guards! The hounds lay with  
One eye awake. The winds sang, "Wait, they're  
thine!"

One brought heath-mead.<sup>48</sup> Ya, ha! now for man's  
hour

Of littleness! I watched it steal away  
Their brains, fetter their feet, and hang their arms  
Like broken boughs—their speech a grunt or growl.  
Cragdun, beware heath-mead and woman's wiles!  
Sleep seized their sodden eyes and made them mine.  
The turf-wall whispered—"pierce." 'Twas done.

I freed

His hands as mother would her screaming child  
From rav'ning wolf! As—mother—would—her—  
child!

O where's my boy, my darling boy? (*Looking wildly  
round she sees Olna.*) O Olna, you were

saved, clutched from the fire, the FIRE, the FIRE!

[*A sudden pause, and trembling in every limb, her face one agony of woe, she stands, spell-bound, as if some far-off, dreadful scene was slowly rising before her.*

Rona. O, O! the Clach n'ibart!<sup>45</sup> Boran's there!  
 O, Balor, strike, strike now! Tear out his heart!  
 'Two for the flames. A stranger youth! Has he  
 A mother, sire, or one who weeping counts  
 The moons, asking the creeping night, "Will morn  
 Bring back my love?" O, who's that other? Hu,  
 O, Hu! it is my boy, my boy! Save, save  
 My child! Help my weak hands! O cruel fire!  
 O Boran, let me die with my dear boy!  
 Death will be sweet! I'll hold him from the flames,  
 And 'mid the fire my dying lips will bless  
 Thy name! Let me but—but——

[*Tearing her hair in an agony of grief she falls senseless on the floor. They carry her gently out, Olua going with them, many of the guests being in tears. Penwar, torn with painful emotion, leaves the room.*

Rao. (*deeply moved*). Hear me. Poor Rona is  
 my care. Her friends  
 Are mine; let hands beware to do her wrong.  
 Can I forget the all she did for me?  
 Now mine, as son, to fill that empty breast.  
 She links us with our awful past. In her  
 Our darkness lives and thunders what we were.  
 O that she shared our peace, and through our  
 joy

Were strengthened to forget.

Guests. Amen! Amen!

[*A bed-chamber in Binns. Rona on a heather couch with her hand in Olua's. After weeping long and bitterly she grows calm as if relieved by her tears.*

*Rona (in a low, calm voice).* How strange this joy to weep! Where have I been?  
Where am I now? The woods are beckoning me.  
The Curnig's wild; he leaps, he bounds, he roars;  
The echoes get no sleep; he pelts their ears  
With shouts; he tramps the wizard's stones in his  
Fierce rage. He calls to me to share his joy.  
The winds and wilds are round me now. Where shall  
I rest this night? The wolves are out. They howl,  
They help the winds in their wild song. But I  
Am here and you . . . I'm lost! Where is my past?  
Or am I two—one in the woods and one  
With you? (*a pause*). No, no! Hear how the winds,  
tired out,  
Are dying on the waste. The bannered woods  
Are far away. The Curnig sleeps. Silence  
And darkness—twins of night—walk hand in hand,  
Their footsteps light as flake of falling snow.  
The weary sleep . . . Olna, I see your tears,  
I hear your old sweet voice. As mother wakes  
Her child with song, so you, my far-aways,  
And make me strong. You saw my husband die!  
Strong was his love as Curnig in his floods.  
You wet his lips with your heal-mead; a smile,  
His grateful thanks. O press my hand and let  
Me know you're here. But am I Rona? Yes,  
My mother's heart tells me I'm Rona still.  
I'll think once more of my dead lord. How brave  
He looked into the mouth of night that men  
Call death! You staunch'd my bleeding heart with  
your  
Sweet ways, and weaned me gently from my grief.  
My sorrows felt a lighter load, my day  
Less dark . . . I'm breaking from some prison-cave!  
You made the mother stronger in my breast,  
Taught me to live for my three boys. Dear was  
Their love; their smile like sunshine on the hills,

Their hands and feet swift at my will ; brave boys !  
 Their after-strength to be my shield in life's  
 Cold eve, their children playing round my knee.  
 That was my dream ! Which is the dream ? O wake  
 Me from my dream. Where are they now ? My boys !  
 Two in the restless, cruel sea ! My last,  
 My Ian, lone star in my troubled sky !  
 The Clach n'ìobart claimed my boy ! The fire,  
 The FIRE ! the FIRE ! Why ask the gods such gifts  
 From men ?—See, see ! it burns, it blazes wild !  
 See ! gods and demons tear up trees. O how  
 They work ! The oak and beech snap in their grasp.  
 The earth flings out their shrieking roots. The gods  
 Are holding holiday. The woods cry " spare ! "  
 What care the gods ? They pile them heap on heap.  
 The fierce flames scare the clouds. They lick the  
 stars

With their red tongues. Ya, ha ! There's Boran on !  
 Pitched high, high on the pile. Ye gods, your arms  
 Are strong. See how he struggles 'mid the fires !  
 They kiss his screaming lips ; no maiden's kiss !  
 Gawin and Clutha next ! The fiery bath  
 Perhaps will purge their souls. Let me away !  
 Ye gods, enough, enough ! O murd'rous fire !

*[She becomes painfully excited.]*

*Olna.* Rest, mother, rest ; thy daughter watches thee.

*Rona (with a sad smile).* Who calls me mother ?

O, dear name ! None calls

Me mother now. Earth hath no word, no song  
 So sweet. The lamb cries " mother " in its bleat,  
 The mother answers back, " I'm here ! " Dwy vach,  
 Thou queen of heaven, bless Olna for her love ;  
 Guard all her sweet young life. How long the night  
 Has been. What dreams have girded me with fear ;  
 With cold and hunger, rain and storm. The old  
 Glad world is back. I feel a strange, sweet calm.  
 Watch by my bed ; I'm safe when you are near,

And add another joy to this lone heart.  
 I'm strangely tired. I go to sleep.  
*[She falls into a deep, calm sleep.]*

*The Hall as before.*

*Rao.* Rona has fallen into a deep, quiet sleep.  
 Olna will not return. She says her place is at  
 Rona's bed.

*Guests.* Just like our Olna.

*Rao. (smiling).* No, no; my Olna.

*Guests.* *Our* Olna. She was ours before yours.

*Rao.* Well, well, my wife, our Olna.

*Mor.* We've cause for joy. Upon a clouded mind  
 Light seems to break. Her hand unconscious helped  
 Our cause. 'Tis ours her future care. No more  
 Shall cruel altars burn. Your bitter tale  
 Is told; the night is past; morn breaks; 'tis ours  
 To haste its coming noon.

*[Raoul and his private guests now freely mingle  
 with the retainers and serfs. They then  
 retire amid cheers. The night is spent in  
 tales, jests, song, feats of skill and happy  
 intercourse.]*

## CONCLUSION.

*Time, SOME YEARS AFTER.*

Where Snowdon <sup>44</sup> rears his rugged crest  
 Near Fortha's winding flood,  
 A lowly cottage nestled warm  
 'Neath skirts of sheltering wood;  
 There on a bed of wracking pain  
 A hoary stranger lay,  
 Whose wearied eye still lingering watched  
 The close of dying day.



He had been found an outcast lone,  
Nigh dead upon the moor,  
But tender hearts and willing hands  
Threw wide dear pity's door.

"Nurse, how I long to break my chain  
And win the grave's sweet rest !  
Life's whirl and hazard I have shared  
By deeds of worth unblest ;  
But death I dread, my past still lives  
And girds my trembling soul ;  
My gods are silent as the grave  
And near death's billows roll."

"Thy—gods—are—vain!" slow spake the nurse,  
"The Cross alone gives peace ;  
Seek mercy; take the pleader's place,  
And thou wilt find release."  
"Tis vain," he sighed, "perhaps that sun  
Has shone its last for me,  
Yet my last prayer is for this house,  
My last breath, blessing thee.  
No light ! Like helmless bark I'm tossed,  
Storms hurling wave on wave,  
And 'mid the gloom of Abred's night  
Death drags me to my grave."

"But I," she breathed, "can tell of woe  
By one frail woman borne,  
Her last star hid, for her no friend,  
Her anguish laughed to scorn ;  
Yet she forgave the darkened man  
Who brought her childless years,  
And round his couch her hands have served,  
And eye watched through her tears ;  
And if an erring, human heart  
Can learn thus to forgive,

Will He, the giver of that grace,  
Refuse to bid thee live ?  
O Boran, yield not to despair,  
Cling to the Cross, there's mercy there !"

"Who names that name ?" he startled cried,  
"O wipe it from the earth ;  
Why was I born ; why did not death  
Blow out life's lamp at first ?"  
"I'm Rona, maniac of the past !  
Our God has made us meet  
To be thy friend, to soothe thy pain,  
And lead thee to His feet ;  
Give me this joy ; make Christ thine own ;  
Give him his star ; win ye a crown."

Deep silence fell upon the scene,  
Night veiled the brooding sky,  
While sobbings shook the pale, worn man  
Who longed yet feared to die.  
How through her deeds he dimly saw  
The Father's grander love,  
Her tender care led straight his soul  
God's mightier grace to prove !

"Canst thou forgive ? Thou hast forgiven !  
Then I will trust thy God ;  
Lead me to light, and where to lay  
My sin's soul-crushing load."

Long hours of pleadings, then, "Good-night,  
But, Rona, pray for me."  
When morn awoke, they found him dead,  
Hands clasped, and on his knee.

## NOTES ON "THE LAST SACRIFICE."

1. *Stonyhill Tower*. The hill takes its name from a "Stannin' Stane" on its northern slope. As the stone bears some traces of the chisel, it is not likely Druidical. The Cro Court would be held near the spot.

2. *Date of Poem*. I have chosen the year 314, rather than the landing of Columbia in 563 (Bede gives 565), as the date of the introduction of Christianity into West Lothian; but all that is implied thereby is that the Cymric Celts, to whom the Gadeni were allied, had a much earlier knowledge of Christianity than the times of Columba or Augustine. The latter landed in England in 597. At Silchester (the Roman *Calleva*) there is a Christian Church supposed to be of the fourth century.

3. *Almoid*, the stone of meeting; from *al*, a stone, and *moid* (the gen. of *mod*), a place of meeting. A large boulder, roughly speaking, of a pillar shape, locally called the "Justice Stone," stands in the Big Wood, Hopetoun. It is deeply sunk in the earth. Before the present road was made, it stood much higher above the surrounding ground than it does now. There are two hollows on its top remotely suggesting seats. Old tradition says that the last Court held there was for the settlement of some Church question between the Abbot of Dunfermline—the Superior—and the Church Court of Abercorn.

4. *Tuatha-de-Dananns*, gods who directed favourably sky, air and earth. See *Celtic Mag.*, No. xcix., vol. ix., Jan. 1884.

5. *Drontheim (Thronthjem)*. A sea-port in Norway. Here, at a very early date, the Vi-Kingers held slave-markets for the sale of their Scotch captives.

6. *Ner (Njord)* of the Norsemen, god of the sea. He delighted in storms.

7. *Pedra* (now *Petrie*) glen. A glen west of Abercorn, said to be haunted by voices and a ghost always draped in black.

8. *Cro*, or *Cra* Court. The stone where Compensation Courts were held. Here also difficulties or disputes about family matters were settled. Now, Crawstane.

9. *The Grey-stone*. A large boulder on the shore, at the

foot of the Dhu-Crags' Bastion, Hopetoun. A favourite haunt of the writer during stormy weather.

10. *Balor of the Evil Eye*. One of the demon-gods of the Caledonians. His angry glance could turn to stone.

11. *Cragdun* (Now Craigton). A small hill in Abercorn Parish; an extinct volcano. Has traces of a British Fort on its summit. I found, many years ago, a drain-like passage on the south side of its top, probably used for domestic purposes when the Fort was occupied, as there is no water on its summit requiring such a channel.

12. *Dagda*. King of Heaven. One of the great gods of the Caledonians. He cared for the good of man.

13. Hooly Court (*ful*, judgment, and *lia*, a stone (German, *heilig*, holy), modernised into *Hooly*, the stone of sacred judgment). Here questions of religion, sacrifices, votive gifts to the gods or priests, etc., were settled. Now Mounthooly.

14. *Beal-t-lia*. The stone of Beal, or the sun (the moon was called *Re*); contracted to Beatlea, now *Beatley*. Another example of *lia* passing into *ley* is found in Boarley, Bo-ar-lia, the stone of the graves of the battlefield. The retaining of the "t" in the contracted word is also seen in *Allt t Sagairt*, the priest's stream, now written Auld Taggart. The terms *Baal* and *Bel* were also applied to the sun. The Druids caused *all fires to be put out* on the 28th October, and on the 1st November the sacred fire was sold to the inhabitants under heavy penalties if light was given to any one under any condition. The time was well chosen for compelling the people to buy. At this stone the sacred fire was sold. On Mayday eve Beal-fires were lighted on all the Beal cairns over the country. The 1st May is still, by Celtic-speaking Irish, called *La Bealteine*. About eighty years ago these fires were common among the children in Edinburgh.

A most interesting custom is still observed at Burghhead, Morayshire, where, on old Hogmanay (11th Jan. new style), the fisher-folks and coopers burn the *Clavie*; its neglect, they believe, would bring misfortune. Formerly all fires were put out, the fire-place and its surroundings thoroughly cleaned, and *the fire afterwards re-lit* from the Clavie. This, surely, is a relic of the Beal-fire of the Druids.

15. *Hu* (pronounced *He*). A demon-god of the Druids; also called Dëon.

16. *Ovates*. Sacrificing priests. The four Orders of the

Druid priesthood were denied the use of arms, but this law seems often to have been set aside in stern emergencies of tribal warfare.

17. *Gadeni*, the early inhabitants of West Lothian, Peebles, etc.; conquered by the Romans in A.D. 81. They were closely allied to the Cymri. The place-names on the east of Scotland have many of them a Welsh origin.

18. *Curnig's glen*, now the Nethermill glen, through which the true Curnig (or Cornie) burn flows. When flooded this brook is very wild.

19. *Yarll*. The old titles were :—*Brenin*, *Teyen* or *Righ*, king (a piece of ground, called Croft-an-Righ, near Holyrood, was lately sold in Edinburgh); *Twysog*, duke; *Jarll* or *Yarll*, earl; *Arglwydd*, lord; *Barwn*, baron, and *Breir*, squire.

20. *The Wizard's putting stones*. Large stones in the bed of the Cornie, now used as supports to the middle bridge in the Nethermill glen. The notion of such boulders having been thrown by malignant powers to do mischief is very common in Scotland and the north of England. There is a *Witch's stone* near Carriden House, said to have been thrown at the first Christian missionaries to that locality, by a witch living near Falkirk. A superstitious fear of the stone still lingers in the neighbourhood.

21. *Garivalt*, the rugged stream. That part of the Cornie burn immediately above and below Lord Lithgow's Well—the sacred well of the Poem. It is now called the *Wishing Well*.

22. *Abred's Caves*. The hell of the Caledonians.

23. *Annait's Well*. A medicinal well in the Morton park (after the Earl of Morton whose property it was in 1452), near Bluegate, called by the old folks in the forties *Annie's well*. Annait was a goddess of the Caledonians, according to Dio who wrote in A.D. 230. Bunsen says she was also worshipped by the Persians and Assyrians. She presided over diseases, mineral wells, etc. It is possible that there is a Druidical connection between the goddess and the well.

24. *Agwet*. The ancient name of the rock on which Edinburgh Castle is built.

25. *Duntarff*, the hill of the wild bull; now Duntarvie.

26. *Spawm of the Swamp*. The old Estate of Duntarvie included a large flat of boggy land, the haunt of ague, south

of Duntarvie Castle. It still retains a hint of its old character in its present suggestive name—*The Myre*.

27. *Gallow Court* (from *gea-lia*, the Sorcery stone, smoothed down to galley, gallow). Here serious crimes were tried and summary punishment dealt out to the criminals. It is now called the Gallowhill.

28. *The Greenan Croft*, the Croft of the Sun. A field now called the Green-rig, lies near the Justice Stone. The terms, *grian*, *grien*, or *greine*, so common in Scotland, do not refer to the colour, but to the sun. Thus, *Grian Dearduil*, the sunny place of Dearduil, in Glencoe; *Mount-greenan*, the sunny mount, near Kilwinning; *Greenan Castle*, the sunny castle, in the parish of Maybole; *Greenan Loch*, the loch of the sun, near Rothesay; *Clack-na-greine*, the stone of the sun, in the island of Bernera, Outer Hebrides. At places with such like names, persons accused of crimes were usually tested by fire when other evidence failed. I have somewhere met with the words, *Degrena*, a sunbeam, and *Dersagrena*, the brightness of the sunbeam, used as names applied to women.

29. *Hot irons and bare feet*, a test of innocence or guilt. The accused was placed blindfolded and barefooted on a certain spot and pieces of hot iron were laid round him a few yards off. If he walked through them scathless he was pronounced innocent; if otherwise, guilty.

30. *Drumcaulk's tarn*. Drumcaulk, the old name of the tarn in the glebe, Abercorn, where it is supposed the water-test (*dip*) was applied. Pity the poor, old wretches; it was death either way! If they sank, they were held innocent, but no effort was allowed to save them; but if they floated they were deemed guilty, and were, at once, stoned to death in the tarn. After the boy, Hosie, was drowned in it, it was filled up—a work of years.

31. *The Halls of Mists*. The abodes of the gods were so called because they (the gods) dwelt amid the clouds, and their ways were hidden from men. They were also called the Halls of Shells. The Caledonians drank their mead from shells; hence the place where the gods and hero-dead feasted was called the Hall of Shells.

32. *The White Picts' Sea*, the Frith of Forth (the *Scottis' Sea* of the Saxons). This frith separated the White Picts from the Black. The former lived on the south side; the latter on

the north. These inhabited most of the east coast, perhaps even to the Pentland (Pictland) Frith.

33. *The "Good Folks" land*, a piece of land dedicated to elves, fairies, etc. Before the Reformation such spots were, by the laws of the Church, left to the primeval curse, "briars and thorns," and received the appropriate name of the *Auld Man's Yaird*. In 1649, the General Assembly ordered such places to be reclaimed, but found it no easy matter to have the law obeyed. Superstition dies hard. It would be interesting to know if the piece of ground, formerly called the *Wilderness*, near the Middle Lodge, Hopetoun, has any connection with this practice of our forefathers.

34. *Mistletoe, the plant of peace*. Yule logs and mistletoe were much in use about the 25th December in honour of the birth of one of the gods of the Druids. The first missionaries seem to have kept up the day with all its friendliness and goodwill so freely shewn by the rich to the poor; but in the beginning of the seventh century, St Augustine and his followers substituted Christ's name for that of the almost forgotten god, but making the day *commemorative* only of His birth.

35. *The Sacrificial Mark*. Divisions of the day were marked by shadows of trees, poles, etc. No sacrifice was allowed to be offered after mid-day. This mode of measuring time is finely referred to in Job vii. 2, where the labourer is described as anxiously watching for the shadow to reach the spot which marked the close of his day's toil, after which he would partake of the sweets of longed-for rest.

36. "*The sword is naked against thee!*" When a Druid was degraded the Bards covered their heads, and one of their number unsheathed a sword, named the offender three times, with the sword uplifted in his hand, adding when the delinquent was last named,—"*the sword is naked against thee.*" There were, however, many degrees of banning. Can this *covering of the head* be the origin of the "black cap" of our criminal courts?

37. *The old Esk* (*asc*, a newt or adder). A term applied to a Druid.

38. *Aebercurnig*, the old name of Abercorn.

39. *Righ*. See under *Yarll*, No. 19.

40. *Dwy Vach*, the lesser Cause; the mother of mankind; the queen of heaven. *Dwy Van* was the greater Cause, father of mankind, etc.

41. *Children, etc.* These were often offered in sacrifice. An Arch-Druid of Mona once offered ten, to avert some threatened calamity. Horns were blown, mingled with yells from the priests and the crowd, to drown the cries of the suffering little ones.

42. *Altath* (from *al* or *all*, water, and *cath*, gen. *catha*, a battle). There seems once to have been a loch near Priestinch, and *Catha* would suggest some battle (tribal) near it. This idea of a loch is also suggested in the word Priestinch, the priests' island (*insula*). A small field near it still retains the name of the *glebe*. The word is now written Auld Cathie.

43. *Heath mead*. A strong drink made from heather. The art of distilling spirits from this plant has been lost for centuries.

44. *Snowdon*. The ancient name of Stirling.

45. *Clach n'ibart*, the stone of sacrifice. This term was generally applied to sacrificial stones. A stone near Blair Athole still retains the name of *Clach n'ibart*.



## THE NEW OUT OF THE OLD.

WRITTEN ON A SPRING MORNING.

HAIL morn, last child of heaven ! the earth  
Now revels in thy new-found birth,

As if no other day  
As fair as thou had smiled, caressed,  
And all her waiting children blest,

And clad in light's array.  
Life thrills the forest's outspread arms,  
And waking buds unfold their charms,

The new leaps from the old,  
And o'er the years now passed away,  
She spreads her flags—a leafy spray—  
'Mid glories yet untold.

O'er moory wastes, o'er field and mead,

Spring's busy fingers ply,  
And garments weave from fallen leaves  
For summer drawing nigh,

Till dear old spots we scarce can trace,  
'Neath fairy work of endless grace.

Here 'mid a new-born world I stand,  
Fresh from my Father's glorious hand,

His year-task scarce begun ;  
In mystery the flowers lie hid,  
And prophecies haunt every mead,

Waiting the growing sun ;  
While voices sing, "Old Winter's reign  
Is loss that fruits in higher gain,

And blesses patient earth ;"  
For nature crowns all death a strife—

A breath-held pause 'tween life and life—  
That cradles higher birth.  
Though dim and dark our visions seem,  
Some voice proclaims,—“No empty dream.”

Yon glorious spheres proclaim from far,  
“Each nebula foretells a star,”  
Nor holds earth empty hands,  
For rugged forms deep wrapt in sleep,  
But wait some touch to life to leap  
To bless the longing lands.  
The flowers whose glories 'trance our souls,  
Have sisters in the wild,  
The type unchanged through countless change,  
Low whispers—“parent, child ;”  
And truths now wrapt in misty haze  
Will grace the coming hours,  
And clothe our souls with broader light,  
As earth is gemmed with flowers,  
Building from broken urns of faith,  
A life whose strong arm baffles death.

The beautiful is ever new,  
And fadeless glory crowns the true,  
These are God's two right hands ;  
And from the wreck of by-past years,  
He now a glorious temple rears,  
And fills earth's empty strands.  
He patient waits interpreters,  
Some ear will catch the song,  
And give a voice to every breeze  
That floats earth's shores along,  
And bid men learn from out the old,  
God builds the new in pearls and gold.

Where clasps eve's hand the parting day?  
Where blends the night with morning's ray?  
They 'lude our eye to trace ;

So fades the old, so springs the new,  
From fruitful pasts our present grew,  
Nor can we these efface.  
From life to life with untraced step,  
Our growing spirits move ;  
Our narrow bounds we slowly break,  
And live in broader love ;  
“ As in a glass ” we darkly see  
The shadow of great things to be,  
And, smitten, learn how broad heaven’s call,  
And joy one Father claims us all.

### HEROES IN COMMON LIFE.

BRIGHT’s the page of Britain’s story,  
Starred with deeds our sires have done,  
In their war-tramp stern and gory,  
With their honours grandly won.  
Proud we hail them fronting legions,  
Indian suns and icy north,  
Sowing on wild, unknown regions  
Deeds of daring, deeds of worth.

What of heroes of the village  
Battling with their endless care,  
And the silent sons of tillage  
With their toil and stinted fare ;  
Scarcely knowing how to-morrow  
Will supply their homes with bread,  
Yet confiding ’mid their sorrow,  
That their dear ones will be fed ?

’Mid our slums, their vices flaunting,  
One holds on there true to God,  
As a sunbeam woodlands haunting,  
Patient bearing all life’s load ;

And our life-boats tempests daring,  
 Hungry waves and goring strands,  
 Clutching men of life despairing  
 From the ocean's cruel hands.

Drum and trump and rush of battle,  
 Charge of men like mountain flood,  
 Cannon thunder, musket rattle  
 Fire to frenzy human blood ;  
 But the *mine* with choke-damp laden !  
 What to urge the rescuing brave ?  
 Tears of wife or plighted maiden,  
 Men in danger ! down and save !  
 Daring all to win a brother,  
 Half already in his grave.

But for these swell no proud numbers,  
 Their eve sinks in clouds alone,  
 And the son with father slumbers,  
 Earth forgotten and unknown.

## TO MR A.

For your braw cheque warm thanks I sen',  
 Your thoughtfu' deed was like a frien'  
 Wha kens how worries tease ;  
 For 'mid our endless round o' care  
 We canna pree e'en scanty fare  
 Without the hard bawbees.

I hae my warsle wi' the lave,  
 And gimp at times the power to save  
 For age an' totterin' feet ;  
 While rainy days but bide their time  
 To blast our days as hoary rime  
 Our wee flowers dear an' sweet.

My bairnies, pale-faced, toddlin' round,  
 My wife bent twa-fauld to the ground,

For a' our comforts carin',  
 Gar me begin to——, waur than greet,  
 Maist stamp the auld shune aff my feet,  
 An' swear my lot's past bearin'.

Sweet Minnie's frock ! You'd hardly ken  
 What first it was, for patch an' men'—  
 Gane braidin', ribban, lace ;  
 An' watchin' her, I've grievin' seen  
 The briny tear steal frae her e'en,  
 An' weet her bonnie face.

There Tam's come in—he Job wad tease—  
 Wi' breeks a' torn frae speilin' trees,  
 Till flutterin' in the wind  
 (I maist should haud this in the dark),  
 Like signals o' distress, his sark  
 Is danglin' out behind !

My Sunday coat ! O dinna speir  
 Its hoary age, it's to me dear,  
 Ay, sirse, I hae nae ither ;  
 But I could thole its thread-bare rig  
 Gin I could hae my bairnies trig,  
 An' warmer clad their mither.

My buiks ! I've read them through an' through,  
 At their auld licht my mouth I screw,  
 An' lang for fresher thought ;  
 But ne'er a penny can I spare,  
 Sae mony ca's wait for my care,  
 My greenin' comes to nought.

A Monday *Scotsman* is a prize !  
 Its stores I scan wi' hungry eyes,  
 Its routh o' bright *Reviews* ;  
 Aiblins they gie my Creed a prog  
 That mak's me start, or forward jog,  
 For truth I wont refuse.

\* \* \* \* \*

Your siller's got my Minnie braws,  
A prent or twa to grace our wa's,  
    My wife, a gran' new bonnet,  
A *Scott* and *Burns* for my ain sel',  
Till gratefu' thoughts my bosom swell,  
    Maist equal to a sonnet.

An' Tam, puir tyke, to save his yelpin'  
I spared the pairt just made for skelpin'  
    An' a' his fears were ended,  
An' easy sat he like the rest,  
Though in his sister's coatie dressed,  
    Till his bit breeks were mended.

But mair ! guid health smiles on us a',  
Nor is my back yet at the wa',  
    An' blythesome days are ours ;  
An' sae we thankfu' tak' our lot,  
Though weeds may whiles ower-grow some spot,  
    We've round us countless flowers.

We'll tak' the bitter wi' the sweet,  
Our little cares wi' stout hairts meet,  
    Frae debt, keep ever free ;  
An' till I drap life's kittle game  
I'll strive to own an upright name,  
    An' that's enough for me.

## STRUGGLE STRENGTHENS.

GIVE me a manly fight,—a foe  
    Of honest steel and brawny arm,  
Whose hand is swift to deal the blow,  
    Stroke hurled on stroke like pelting storm.  
With eye alert in watch and ward,  
    Each action at its highest strain,

I learn—nerve-strung—to strike, to guard,  
 My ground to hold, perchance to gain ;  
 My wounds but fire me for the strife,  
 And in each blow I send my life.

The petty tyrant's worrying goad,  
 The envious hater's poisoned blight,  
 The coward sneak who haunts my road,  
 Wielding to wound a borrowed might,  
 Because I dare to hold to right ;  
 Or, battling in a nobler strife,  
 Unseen to men but dear to heaven,  
 I agonizing fight for life,  
 From every earthly refuge driven—  
 These rise, blind powers, to break some chain,  
 And make me free-born man again.

My spirit-foes—their hour is now !  
 Flaunting my falls as victories won ;  
 With burning cheek I smitten bow,  
 And learn the errors I have done ;  
 With stern resolve I, humbled, plan,  
 And hate those sins that laid me low  
 And made me coward, slew the man,  
 And gave the vantage to the foe ;  
 On my dead self I firmer stand,  
 And in my weakness feel a might,  
 That lends its swiftness to my brand,  
 And crowns me victor in the fight.

## AT HOGGIE'S CAIRN, COLDSTREAM.

### A MEMORY OF MATTHEW CULLEY.

By Tweed's waters sat four hempies—  
 Little *fear-noughts* in their way—  
 Boasting of their feats of daring,  
 Done in some grand yesterday.

"Ah," cries Mat, "but I'm your master,  
I can wade old Hoggie's Cairn!"  
"That you cannot," cried his playmates,  
"That's what sailors call a 'yarn.'"

Hoggie's Cairn! How I have shuddered,  
As it voiced each eddying wave,  
Sending from its depths of darkness  
Whisperings of a watery grave.

"Done!" cried Mat, and soon he's naked;  
(How our hearts gave quickened beat),  
One large stone in each hand clutching—  
Cunning factors in his feat.  
In he dashed! the pool's head gaining,  
With the stones held high o'erhead,  
Then we felt him twice our master,  
As he faced the cairn's deep bed.

Hushed, we watched him sinking, sinking,  
Pained we held our quickened breath;  
Had he looked his last upon us?  
Had we urged him to his death?  
How the hungry waves climb round him,  
Wipe him almost from our eyes!  
Did we pray? I think our silence  
Won some answer from the skies.

O the waters prove the master!  
Nothing but the stones are seen,  
Moving strangely 'mid the ripples  
Dancing 'neath day's golden sheen.  
Give us back that daring spirit!  
In, yet not of land or flood,  
Heir, perhaps, of pregnant morrows,  
Throbbing with the breath of God.



See! The stones are slowly rising!  
Now Mat's head above appears,  
Ay, he's done it; what a hero!  
Give our *fear-nought* thrice three cheers!  
But that scene has strangely taught me  
Burdens do not clog our way,  
For they give us firmer footing  
And glad songs at close of day.

## TO A YOUNG FRIEND

ON HIS FAILING \* IN AN IMPORTANT  
EXAMINATION.

PAINED I'm at this failure, brother,  
Biting earth in life's first fight;  
Clutch again thy trampled banner,  
Though there's darkness, all's not night.  
Beaten! well, to-day thou'rt wiser,  
And, if true, a stronger man;  
Failures sift us, and our man-dross  
In our yesterdays they scan,  
Till our broken threads of action,  
All our laggings in the race,  
Faint resolves and listless efforts  
Rise accusers to our face.

Half those moments spent in thought-drift,  
Half those toils for doubtful gain,  
Lit with action—high-souled purpose,  
Would have showered thee golden grain.  
Thine's no halting—still more fruitless  
Moping o'er some shattered dream;  
Wouldst thou play the craven boatman,  
Drifting log-like down the stream?

\* He was successful in his second attempt.

Up! the oar thy hand is waiting,  
Still thy hour is early morn ;  
Of thy failure let thy future  
Write, that day thy soul was born !

Slumbers deep need rough awakenings,  
Shattered limbs the cruel knife,  
Misspent hours a stern high purpose  
To redeem these wastes of life.  
'Mid thy broken gods take courage,  
Thine's, somewhere, the lot of all ;  
Thousands shout from heights of triumph,  
Their first gain was from their fall.  
What is won by soulless effort  
Is not worth a man to prize ;  
Earth may fling her flowers around us,  
But her gold deep hidden lies.

Life is but our death-resistance,  
He that hesitates is lost ;  
And there's death that's noblest living,  
Where the base gives up the ghost.  
Cowards are for ever waiting  
Some blest chance their hands to find ;  
Be thine own right hand thy future,  
With thy lifeless past behind.

Battered, bleeding, but unconquered  
Stood our sires in days of old ;  
Shall we, children of such fathers,  
Fight our fight with hearts less bold ?  
Earth has claims we dare not silence,  
Ours is part of one vast plan,  
And our acts are carving features  
On our plastic deathless man ;  
Nearing in each high endeavour,  
Truth eternal—life's high goal ;  
Making ours, to their full measure,  
The unspent forces of the soul.

THOUGHTS ON THE ASH-TREE  
HEIGHTS, COLDSTREAM.

THRICE dear old scenes, where Nature strains  
Her sweetest arts to bless,  
And Godlike throws o'er woods and plains  
A rich and fair largesse ;  
While Tweed forgets his own proud share,  
Lost in the glory everywhere.

Earth hears heaven's call ; glad answers rise,  
Life leaps from every sod,  
And daisies star earth's grassy skies  
And all things whisper, " God ! "  
Till soul-enrapt I feel Him near,  
And grateful love speaks in a tear.

His joyous servants toiling round  
Wipe out fierce winter's trail,  
While larks envoice the blue profound,  
And mellow thrush, the vale ;  
Where man might learn in life's glad hours  
To weave, like them, his snows to flowers.

The Channel hails spring's gleesome tread,  
Lees dons her willowy store,  
The Crawgreen haughs flowered carpets spread,  
And fringe Tweed's winding shore ;  
While yon proud "caul" lends his deep voice  
And echoing crags hear and rejoice.

Our " Old Ash Tree " fronting the blast  
His summer robe regains,  
And shouts, " Stern winter's storms are past,  
And life thrills all my veins,  
Then, doubting soul, learn summer waits  
Prophetic heir at winter's gates."

And Cheviot, wrapped in purple sheen,  
 Nestling his streams and dales,  
 Rears his bold front like truth, I ween,  
 Above earth's misty vales ;  
 Though snows yet mar his royal stole,  
 Like lingering sin in ransomed soul.

O Nature, glorious are thy ways !  
 Each sound a quickening chime,  
 Thy smiles tune thousand harps to praise,  
 Thy storms wake thoughts sublime ;  
 Till joy and awe in blended voice,  
 Shout, "heaven rules all, rejoice !"

### A CALL TO DUTY.

(The closing of a Lecture on "The Heritage of Toil.")

DOWN with fear and doubting,  
 Up and act like men,  
 Valour's seen in fighting,  
 Faith 'mid clouds and din ;  
 Ours is, "Up and onward"—  
 This our battle-cry ;  
 Boldly front each foeman,  
 Ours to "do or die !"  
 Each has work assigned him :  
 Proxies are unknown  
 In the law of labour  
 Issued from the Throne.

Urge the car of progress  
 For our country's weal,  
 Onward, hoping, pressing—  
 Shoulder to the wheel.  
 Laggards in this life-race,  
 Cravens whom you meet,

Deem them not true brothers,  
Spurn them from your feet.  
Win your daily portion,  
Heaven its strength supplies ;  
Be an agent under  
Th' Builder of the Skies.

Thine's a path of honour,  
By earth's noblest trod ;  
He who toils already is  
Helper to his God !  
Dream not of a future,  
Fretting life away,  
Th' harvests of to-morrow  
Hang upon to-day.  
Seize the golden present,  
'Tis the future's door,  
Through whose waiting portals  
Earth flings free her store.

Duty's flag is flying  
On the breezy air,  
From our hands demanding  
Action everywhere.  
Thine's to-day ! Her glory  
Waits the brave and true,  
And thy dreamt to-morrow  
Has no crowns for you.  
Help, then, brothers, sisters :  
Help with hand or head ;  
Spend life's day in rearing  
Labour's pyramid.

## TO A MINISTER

WHO, IN THE PULPIT, JUSTIFIED HIS GOSSIP-  
ING BY PLEADING HE THUS LEARNED HIS  
"PEOPLE'S FAILINGS."

My pastor dear, crook houghs, an' hear  
My airtless rhymin' story,  
Your merits rare truth maun lay bare,  
An' don you in your glory.  
Whar' can we find sae quick a mind  
To mak' a hair a tether,  
Or tak' some name, splairge ower its fame,  
An' mire it a'-the-gither?

The guid men do that's kenned by you,  
You haud it badly dune,  
For you've the knack to find a crack,  
Or mak' ane gif there's nane.  
O wi' what skill an' routh o' will  
You twist, supply, suppose,  
An' change some tale your crones retail,  
( ) Before their very nose!

Round a' the rich you dig a ditch,  
Then souse them in, protestin',  
For what care you? The monied crew  
Was made for scandal bastin'.  
But when you want the needfu' "blunt"  
For some wild dream or ither,  
You fleece these sheep by flatteries deep,  
Without a dwam or swither.

Odds sirce, we burn or, loathin', turn,  
A swear-word hard repressin',  
To hear your *say* on Sabbath day,  
Crown-capped wi' priestly blessin'!

The warlin's sneer, the scoffer's jeer  
 Find food frae you on Sunday,  
 You arm their hands wi' fiery brands  
 To roast us on the Monday.

Wad you but throw sic rousin' glow  
 Into your scrap-patched sermon,  
 Then rich wad fa' glad joy on a',  
 Like dews on sunny Hermon.  
 When 'mang us folks first fell your strokes,  
 Your words, like hornets, stung us,  
 That day's now past, for "*Mess John's last*,"  
 Is quite a joke among us.

Did you e'er think words hae a link  
 That daith's han's canna sever,  
 That to your soul—their magnet pole—  
 They a' are linked the-gither?  
 When at heaven's gate you judgment wait  
 Beside your injured men,  
 What will you say, dear pastor, pray,  
 To all your scandals them?

## WRITTEN BEFORE OPENING SCHOOL ONE SUNNY MORNING.

EARTH wakes from rosy sleep,  
 Her children hear, and rise  
 And pay from field and mount and deep,  
 Love's joyous sacrifice.  
 Hope swells her rousing lay,  
 Her banner—golden light,  
 She forward points to growing day,  
 Behind, to vanquished night.

With new-born zeal I rise  
 To meet my flock again;  
 "Nurse these for me" sounds from the skies  
 "And mould these future men."

*That* call now thrills my soul,  
Its claims in glory soar,  
With heart intent upon my goal,  
I give my life ! What more ?

“LOST IN THE WOODS.”

While making a “clearing” in Canada some years ago, the woodmen found the remains of a young man, with a few shreds of clothing still clinging to the bones. By their side lay a tin flask on which was scratched with a knife the date, owner’s name, age, place of birth (Aberdeenshire), and the touching words,—“Lost in the woods. Lain down to die !”

“Lost in the woods ; lain down to die !  
Alone, no parting tear ;  
The winds have found their place of rest,  
The silence fills with fear ;  
The hungry woods frown in their gloom,  
And earth denies her last—a tomb.

“O pang, so young and strong to die !  
No touch of youth’s decay ;  
One step aside ! the die is cast,  
And death at close of day !  
To earth, to heaven my cry has sped,  
They twain are dumb—they count me dead !

“O life ! O Scotland far away !  
O friends and tender love !  
Know ye the cup my Father gives  
My faith and trust to prove ?  
O God ! ’tis hard thus here to die,  
Be near, be near ! shew Thou art nigh !

“My home ; my mother’s grave I see,  
The church hid in the dell,  
My Mary, life’s last ebbing thoughts  
Are thine,—farewell, farewell !



My wearied feet refuse to try,  
My hopeless heart mourns out,—“ I die ! ”

“ Wilt thou e’er dream I’ve thee forgot,  
Or faithful wait for years,  
And hope each morn will clear thy sky,  
And dry thy silent tears,  
Till time will slowly whisper, ‘ dead ! ’  
Yet feel in heart our souls are wed ? ”

Then pitying nature gave him sleep,  
Blest balm to human woes !  
And in his dreams his boyhood days  
And distant home arose ;  
The summer sun had newly set,  
And dying daylight lingered yet.

Down in the hazel dell he roved,  
Where played the prattling rill,  
His home, upon the other side,  
Lay nestling ’neath the hill,  
And through the woods his merry voice  
Made echoes shout and crags rejoice.

Then from his cottage door he heard  
His mother call him home,  
His joyous soul with love aflame  
Called back, “ I come, I come ! ”  
He crossed death’s stream, forgot earth’s care,  
He entered heaven and met her there !

### AN INVOCATION TO SPRING.

O, COME, gentle spring—happy childhood of summer,  
And speak to our souls and rouse life again ;  
And thou, cheering sun, bid the rust from thy chariot,  
And roll thy proud song to the hearts of dead men !

"I come," shouts the sun, "'mid the earth's blushing  
gladness,  
As the dear Lord hath willed, and the nations I  
greet,  
And pour from my chariot some rays of His glory,  
And flowers strew the earth as the dust of my  
feet.

"Down, down the deep valleys, like bright golden  
arrows,  
My light-footed elfins sweep onward in glee,  
And chase the cold mist-wraiths from out their grey  
hidings,  
And sing of a summer still destined to be;  
Then up the dark mountains, on whose frowning  
summits  
Stern winter unmoved holds his cold, icy sway,  
They bound and assail him until his last stronghold  
In the mists of the morning is melted away.

"And through the proud forest which battles the  
tempests,  
I waken the buds rocked to sleep in their arms,  
And fling showers of blossoms o'er valley and  
moorland,  
Till deserts rejoice and woods shout their charms.  
Now heaven touches earth and sweet nature rejoicing  
Forgets all her sorrows from winter's cold chain,  
And hangs on each spraylet some token of gladness  
That heralds to man joyous summer again.

"The woods wake the songs slumbering deep in  
their branches,  
And hymn out their bliss at the cradle of day,  
Where the waves of the dawn lave the shores of the  
morning,  
And night in my arms like a breath dies away."

Then, welcome, glad spring-time, I hail thy returning,  
Thou angel of hope to the rest of the year ;  
Thou speakest of joy to the heart of the mourning,  
When Jesu in triumph "that day" shall appear.

## THE HERMIT OF TINDALHOUSE.

### A TRADITION OF TILLSIDE.

THREE strangers sought one summer morn  
Fair Etal's sweet retreat,  
Whose castle, battle-rent and worn,  
Bows captive at Time's feet ;  
The far-off past spoke to each soul,  
As pensive silence o'er them stole.

The tramp of men, the trumpet's call,  
And woman's tears in clashing hall,  
'Mid groans from dungeons pent,  
A moment rise, flit past, are gone,  
The silent hall, the crumbling stone,  
Their only monument.

Old Blythe, their guide, told all his tale,  
With touches here and there  
Of doubtful lore, of crime and wail,  
To win the strangers' ear ;  
Of generous youth and deeds sublime,  
Lighting the night of war,  
Of goodness in the olden time,  
Still shining as a star ;  
Or Douglas with his slogan cry,  
And Elliot's ruthless bands,  
Whose fires made blush the midnight sky,  
And marred the South'ren lands,  
And on red fields cold, stiff and stark,  
They left their Border arrow-mark.

Quoth Blythe, "Let nearer times be ours ;  
Why wake the troubled eld,  
Dark with the scenes of lawless powers  
By ruthless passions swelled ?  
Dearer to me *The Hermit's Cave*,  
Where by slow Till yon forests wave.

With quick assent and strong, glad life  
They sought lone Tindal wood,  
Whose stalwart sons camp on the cliff,  
And watch Till's silent flood ;  
Enrapt they scanned the beauties round,  
The Sabbath calm, the peace profound  
(Where I could spend proud manhood's day  
And dream at eve my life away).

Here golden broom, there scented may,  
With clumps of virgin sloe,  
And brackens with the breeze at play,  
All clad in summer's glow ;  
And bees reaped where they "had not sowed,"  
Till flowers bent 'neath their humming load.

With glowing cheek they gained the crest  
Where Tindal cots now stand,  
*Then* conquering woods still forward pressed,  
And seized the helpless land ;  
Till axe and plough and brawny toil  
Bade them "Stand back that fields might smile."

With Indian step the trackless way  
Blythe led them through the wood,  
Whose leafy roof shut out the day,  
Till all in twilight stood ;  
Though sunshafts oft the darkness clave,  
Like angel arm made bare to save.

On right an ivy curtain hung,  
Mantling the rocks with care,  
While happy birds in rapture sung,  
To love-mates nestling near ;  
Blythe to the screen one proud touch gave,  
"See, strangers, see, The Hermit's Cave !"  
With eager gaze they scanned the cell,  
Then prayed their chatty guide to tell  
The story of the sad lone man,—  
He bowed assent, and thus began :—  
"Culloden Moor had told its tale,  
And filled the North with tears and wail.  
Like rav'ning wolves on hapless fold  
The Whigs ran down their prey for gold,  
Till hearts recoiled, men held their breath  
At blasted homes, and sheaves of death.  
'Twas then around a whisper spread,  
A *rebel* to these woods had fled.  
*That* was his shield ; war was forgot,  
Our hearts spoke out and mourned his lot.  
Mean was his garb, but one could trace  
The better-born in mien and face ;  
Straight as a pine with strong-knit frame,  
A Chieftain's rank he well might claim.  
His rod and line he often plied  
From Etal down to Tweed's fair tide ;  
For many a pool lies there about,  
The shady haunts of lusty trout.  
Near Tiptoe's Cliffs there lies a stone,  
There he would sit for hours alone,  
Lost in some dream of sunny hours,  
When love's dear hand strewed earth with flowers.  
Sometimes a shepherd passing by  
Would deem a tear stood in his eye,  
And as he passed, the thought would start,  
What grief lay tugging at his heart ?  
"Then mercy's tardy voice at last  
Bade reign of axe and rope be past ;

The Rebs might seek the haunts of men,  
And taste the bliss of home again.  
A friendly hand the glad news wrote,  
I laid it on his resting spot  
And watched him come. My heart beat wild,  
For freedom's sun now on him smiled.  
He read,—tore it in sullen mood,  
And threw the fragments on the flood.  
Amazed I stood! Who was this man?  
What crime was his? What social ban?  
These silvery waters bore that day  
More than the riven note away;  
With it our silent pity fled,  
And dark surmisings grew instead;  
Was he some wretch from far-off lands,  
With crime and blood red on his hands?  
Men shunned his path, spoke oft and free  
Of dangling rope on rootless tree.  
Then slow the gossip died away  
Finding, as wont, some other prey,  
And he was left to haunt this wood,  
Yon barren moors, and Till's slow flood.  
The years sped on; still he was seen  
Mid winter's snows and summer's sheen;  
He moved in wood and purple heath,  
Like wandering sprite from realms of death;  
Then from our midst he disappeared,  
The where? The why? None asked or cared.  
"Once searching here for one lost lamb  
To this lone spot I wandering came;  
My dog the ivy screen dashed through,  
Gave one low bark; I forward flew,  
One grasp, and lo! the cave's in view.  
'The Hermit's home,' I wildly cried,  
And looking round, this book I spied,  
With many odds and ends beside,  
And these I keep with tender care,  
And for his sake I hold them dear.

If time nor patience with you fail,  
I now shall read The Hermit's Tale."

## PART SECOND—THE MANUSCRIPT.

(Reported as having been found in the cave.)

"An outcast from the haunts of men,  
Be thou my tongue, thou silent pen ;  
'Twill ease my pangs to ponder o'er  
The better days life showered before ;  
They hold my heart—a living tie,  
Too strong to break, too pure to die.  
Yet memories dark each other chase,  
And clutch my heart and pale my face,  
Till from my seat I start with pain,  
Fired by the frenzy of my brain,  
Where each past scene by mystic spell,  
Upreats my heaven or digs my hell.

"Where Manor, as a pure young bride,  
Is fondly wed to Tweed's proud tide,  
No heart so glad, no life so free,  
As was the lot of Walter Lee.  
A goodly farm my father held,  
With thriving flocks and herds well filled.  
Day was a song, the very night  
Wove dreams of life and wild delight.  
Dear were our glens and flashing rills,  
But dearer far our proud old hills.  
In their wild haunts glad hours I'd spend,  
Their every storm I hailed as friend ;  
They sang of years and deeds of fame,  
And through their storm-bursts rang my name.  
O dreams ! How bright to childhood hours,  
How crowned with hope to youth's proud  
powers,  
To manhood's prime how pale their gleams,  
To hoary age how false are dreams !

“The dwellings of our savage sires,  
Where e'en tradition's voice expires,  
Their human cares, their hopes and fears,  
Came sounding down the far-off years.  
I loved these men ! They'd trod those hills,  
Loved all the glory here that thrills ;  
Had 'mid them loved, had for them bled,  
The wild winds knew each lonely bed.  
Then patriot fire would flame my blood,  
As proud I gazed o'er mount and flood,  
Till my young heart sang in its pride  
'No land so fair as old Tweedside.'

Sing of the Border land, sing of the free,  
Deeds of our father-land aye dear to me ;  
Hear how their slogan-cry rings down the glen,  
Telling of foemen nigh,—fierce Southern men ;  
See how they tramp our heath ; on, wild they come,  
Give them their piece of earth,—give them a tomb !

“Now manhood down my young face crept,  
But in my breast love slumbered yet.  
I'd heard its tales and sung its praise,  
Its steadfast deeds, and fickle ways.  
It hung a halo round each maid,  
And with men's heart-strings toying played.  
Nature had not her floods unbarred,  
Nor had her fating word been heard.

“Once passing down dark Newby's side  
Before me lay the landscape wide  
In peaceful rest 'neath eve's sweet charms,  
Like beauty sleeping in love's arms.  
Venlaw gazed on the setting sun,  
His waving pines gave their 'well done !'  
And Hamildeen raised his bare head  
In triumph o'er the Roman, dead ;  
Where heaths have sworn their task is now  
To wipe Rome's furrows from his brow.  
They all are mine ! I see them rise  
Fair children of my own dear skies ;



The Kips—the faithful sisters three—  
Stand proud in maiden liberty ;  
There bold Lee Pen and Sunehope heights  
Now smile or frown 'neath changing lights ;  
Cademuir his purple shoulders bends  
To Frank Croft woods and hails them friends ;  
Rent Neidpath—like some war-worn lord—  
Stands o'er fair Tweed as royal guard,  
Claiming as his our dear old river  
Once seen, then loved, and loved for ever !  
Till grateful earth tells heaven above,  
' Here peace hath home, and God is Love.'

“ But pressing on my eager way,  
The Gipsy Glen before me lay,  
With rustic bridge and rippling stream  
The painter's haunt and poet's dream.  
Reaching 'mid song the babbling rill,  
The bridge was gone—a flood ! Ah, well !  
Can I not leap ? Ne'er be it said  
' Brave Walter Lee here stooped to wade.'  
I sprang,—the treacherous bank gave way,  
And Walter Lee in mid-stream lay !  
The busy waters mocked my plight,  
And round me danced in wild delight ;  
More than ashamed I struggling rose,  
My cap was gone ; my dripping clothes  
Shed floods of tears at my distress,  
And made, unknown, my sorrows less.

“ While standing, hapless dripping there,  
A merry laugh broke on the air ;  
E'en in my plight I knew full well  
From woman's lips it rippling fell.  
My eye, quick servant of my ear,  
Swept to a daisied meadow near,  
And there a maid ! Love's hour had come,  
My heart was chained nor more to roam.  
How strange man's lot ! That dancing wave  
That woke her laugh made me her slave.



*From a Photo by*

**RUSTIC BRIDGE IN GIPSIES' GLEN, PEEBLES.**

*J. I. & No. 19, 148.  
(Valentine & Sons, Ltd.)*



Then to my aid she quickly came,  
Her merry face half-clad with shame ;  
My droll mishap made her forget,  
That duty owed misfortune debt.  
'Come, let me wipe my laugh away,  
Our house is near and gone's the day.'  
I followed, lost in one strange dream,  
All earthly care gone with the stream ;  
She more than witched the homeward way  
With banter, pity, joke and play,  
Tossing in glee her golden tresses,  
I fain had closed her lips with kisses.  
"But why the old, old tale repeat ?  
With joyous heart I took my fate.  
That dear auld house, the auld man's crack,  
Its hearty cheer and 'haste ye back,'  
Thrilled all my soul,—I feel it yet  
While in this gloomy cave I sit.  
O life, O love ! Could one but see  
The shadows of the years to be,  
How man would ponder, shrink, recoil,  
Hurl back in scorn their witching smile.  
But near a gulf I staggering reel  
Scared at the thoughts I shuddering feel ;  
I'd drag the past, years yet afar,  
Heaven, earth and hell to right's dread  
bar  
And ask, 'Why are things as they are ?'  
I see a brawny youth roll past,  
In fur, and coach and pair,  
While age and want creep through the blast,  
In rags and hoary hair.  
Here promise high nipped in the bud,  
And parents' hopes laid in the sod,  
And widows' early tears ;  
While sodden slaves to self and sin,  
With sturdy step their long race run  
Of worse than useless years.

Here pulpits emptied of their light—  
     Men souled to lead to day—  
 There drones, whose love's a polar night,  
     Seem never to decay.  
 And infants on earth's iron strand  
 Lie rocked by stern misfortune's hand,  
     Baptized in misery's tears,  
 Their teachers—rags and hunger's thorn,  
 Their guides—the well-clad's heartless scorn,  
     Their curses—all their prayers.  
 Our jails upon them silent wait,  
 The felon's chain is in their fate,  
     And men cry out—'*depraved*,'  
 As dark some outcast gropes his road,  
 And through the gallows meets his God,  
     A loving hand had saved !  
 But I am blind—despair's bond-slave,  
 And read God darkly through this cave.  
 Away the past ; her dreams are fled,  
 To hope and day my heart is dead.  
 "Twas strange how oft—nigh day on day—  
 The Gipsy Glen lay in my way,  
 And in Greenbank I'd rest awhile,  
 And bask in winsome Nancy's smile ;  
     'Mid laughin' an' daffin',  
     Wi' hope my only store,  
     The glaumer o' summer  
     Lay smilin' roun' that door.  
 The bridge was ever in our sight  
 A dear old spot aye clad in light.  
 One summer eve we on it stood,  
 The dying day sheened all the wood ;  
 Nan watched the glow fade from the skies,  
 While trustful love glowed in her eyes ;  
 Half sad she sighed in accents low,  
 'Can love fade as that evening glow  
 And give the heart a tearless woe ?'  
 Then down her cheek slow rolled a tear,—

We started both—a foot was near,  
’Twas Murray Hay of Morningside,  
A proud young laird of acres wide ;  
One bitter look on me he cast,  
And frowned on Nan as he strode past.  
With quivering voice I prayed her own  
The secret of that angry frown.  
With pale sad look she met my quest,  
Told how his *suit* he’d eager pressed.  
She knew his worth. His spotless name  
Might well a maiden’s homage claim.  
Her father’s house had felt his care ;  
Her ‘No!’ had cost her many a tear,  
For gratitude his claim hard pressed,  
And tugged with strong hand in her breast ;  
But still some sacred voice her told,  
Love claimed a higher price than gold ;  
Before high heaven she’d play no part,  
To give her hand without her heart.

“That evening saw a happy pair  
Give plighted troth ’mid visions fair ;  
The trees clapped hands, joy filled the grove,  
The breeze gave shouts, the brook sang love,  
And glad hails rose from countless flowers,”  
All sang of bliss for heaven was ours.  
The pawkie laird on our return  
Gave his sly poke—‘that waefu’ burn!’

### PART THIRD.

“Now far from Peebles’ Gipsy Glen  
I hear the tramp of hurrying men,  
Trade’s thunder-roar, the war and pain  
For daily bread or Mammon-gain ;  
Where hell lends iron to the feet,  
And shameless guilt pollutes the street.  
London! The world’s vast trading mart,  
Thou throbbest as the nation’s heart ;

Thy streets—thy veins, whose endless throng  
Rolls as thy tide of life along.  
There, tossed as leaves in Autumn's blast,  
My opening life was sternly passed ;  
Then one who'd fought, stretched out his  
hand  
And dragged me, sinking, safe to land.  
Then mine to win this true friend's smile,  
And pay him back by grateful toil.  
Ay, Toil ! I like that word. It rings  
Of heart and hand—all noble things—  
Nor angels round th' eternal throne,  
A grander word for *life* have known.  
Time rained success. He holds a prize  
For every hand that sternly tries ;  
And brightening hopes still fairer wove,  
For Nancy shared my home and love,  
A love that found the longest day  
Too short to sing her witching lay ;  
And when the eye's undimmed by sorrow,  
Fair is the brow of each to-morrow !  
“Now ageing years my master pressed,  
And made him long for quiet rest.  
He had no friend, he'd own with tears,  
They'd drifted far 'mid widening years,  
And what was wealth, or what it gave,  
When strength had fled, and nigh the grave ?  
One day, he said, 'for thy true worth  
I give thee all I have on earth.  
No, no, don't speak. . . . I hand all o'er,  
There are the *Deeds*,—there's nothing more.'  
I clutched his hand ; my tongue me failed  
To word the task my heart entailed.  
Then in his gentle way he said,  
'You'll care for me when I am dead,  
And lay me in my last lone bed ?'  
A tear stole down his furrowed cheek,  
The moment made that strong man weak.

That night Nan said with glowing eye,  
'Here let him live, here let him die ;  
As daughter I will for him care,  
No want o'erlook, nor love-act spare !'  
With heart aflame she sought his home,  
Won his lone heart,—he'd gladly come.  
Say, Why does woman hit the mark  
While poor, proud man gropes in the dark ?  
He thinks and weighs, claims reason's light,  
Her heart sees straight and judges right.

"Enough, Nan played a noble part  
And cheered the old man's lonely heart.  
John Grant, my son, who bore his name,  
Would coax him to some easy game—  
A noisy pair, but we both smiled,  
'Twas sunshine and his hours beguiled.  
Maud, my first-born, would to him creep  
And read the worn-out man asleep.  
One eve in pensive thought he lay,  
And watched the close of dying day ;  
Upon his brow a sunbeam fell—  
A glory-lettered, 'All is well !'  
A golden threadlet from the throne,  
To guide the pilgrim to his own.  
With eye upon the glowing west,  
His withered hands he slowly clasped,  
Gave one low sigh, and found his rest.

"Years came and went and labour bore  
Her proud rewards in growing store.  
Then fortune paused ; clouds swept my sky,  
Blow fell on blow till night was nigh.  
Each shook this trembling soul of mine  
As felling axe the shuddering pine.  
Shorn of my strength, no star to guide,  
I lay a wreck left by the tide.  
How nobly then my brave young wife  
Nerved me to hope and sunned my life.  
I saw the rose fade from her cheek,



The gnawing grief she would not speak ;  
Her sad sweet smile where pain and love  
In equal battle ever strove.  
From our bright past some tale she'd glean,  
And on to-morrow throw its sheen ;  
'Our sun,' she'd say, 'has not yet set,  
My fathers' God can not forget ;  
A little cot's a kingdom where  
Brave hearts are wed and love is there.'  
In her I found my home thrice blest,  
An Eden-bower of hope and rest.

"Then Hay's dark shadow crossed the  
scene,

His old proud self and lordly mien ;  
Yet kind he was ; joked of the 'Glen,'  
We then were lads, we now were men.  
Old tales were told of far-off days,  
Wrapped round with memory's golden haze.  
His city talk and trifling jest  
Were daggers in my harrowed breast.  
If he knew aught, then had he come  
To triumph o'er my tottering home ?  
Was this revenge for wounded pride,  
At Manor trampling Morningside ?

"Drifting unhelmed, then came the end,  
I'd signed a *Bond* to save a friend ;  
That man proved false ; nought could avail,  
All doors were shut save one—the jail !  
I hurried home in wild despair,  
To tell my woe in one dear ear ;  
I rushed within. O sight ! I found  
That traitor in Nan's fair arms bound ;  
Her outstretched arms his shoulders pressed,  
Her bending head lay on his breast.  
I stood transfixed 'neath some dread spell,  
While from her lips these dark words fell,  
'O friend, my friend in days long past,  
True as at first, true to the last !'

Hell flamed my soul and fired my hand,  
Quick as a thought I clutched a brand  
And forward sprang. 'Die, wretch!' I hissed,  
And plunged my dagger in his breast.  
He groaned and fell. I turned and fled,  
And left the faithless with her dead.  
On to my *Rooms*, there gold I found,  
While trembling at each passing sound.  
With quaking heart I shuddering fled  
For blood's dark stain was on my head.

"Needless my weary steps to trace  
Till here I found a resting place.  
These woods that smiling greet the sky,  
Hid me from man's hard, cruel eye.  
Once nesting here to sate want's crave,  
I stumbled on this vine-hid cave;  
A grateful prayer—an utterance brief—  
Leaped from my heart and gave relief.  
Surprised I gazed. Its walls still bore  
The trace of sheltering men before;  
On left a hearth; a ledge for bed  
And niches cut for barb or blade.  
But fading day for action pressed  
For aching limbs were claiming rest.  
With haste I formed a brachen bed,  
Where I could lay my weary head.  
How want schools hearts to grateful bend,  
And count the meanest gain a friend.  
This cave, that bed, the smoke-stained roof,  
Were welcome joys—more than enough.  
Before repose had o'er me crept  
I wondered who last here had slept;  
Some lonely man tired of earth's care,  
Or stained with blood as my hands were?  
Or far-off sires, wild as the woods,  
Counting the powers of nature gods,  
Fierce fighting bison, wolf or bear  
For dear life's sake or daily fare?

Then sleep her drowsy mantle spread,  
And life's dark tale lay voiceless—dead.  
Then in strange lands untired I roamed,  
'Mid woods with massy leafage domed ;  
With wild beast's skin my loins were clad,  
Strength pulsed my veins, and I was glad.  
A deer as quarry proud I bore,  
Trapped by a lake's wood-girded shore,  
With spear in hand I sped my way,  
Flinging my song to closing day,  
Of home and love ; my children's mirth—  
The sweetest music born of earth.  
As through the wood I eager pushed,  
A fierce brown bear upon me rushed.  
With parry, thrust and active foot,  
I battled with the mighty brute.  
Fainting, yet firm, alone I stood,  
While arms and breast ran red with blood.  
One lucky stroke—more chance than art—  
And my swift spear had pierced his heart ;  
But as he fell he heaved a groan  
That struck me dumb, turned me to stone,  
For in his blood before me lay,  
My traitor foe—base Murray Hay !  
With terror filled I gave a scream,  
And struggling woke—it was a dream.  
Yet what avails my waking hours,  
Earth's woodland songs and star-gem flowers ?  
At morning's dawn and eventide,  
A shade walks ever by my side ;  
For memory yields no glad release,  
And questioning conscience strangles peace.  
"Twere vain to tell each little plan  
I schemed to baffle prying man ;  
A needless task. Each setting sun  
Proclaimed my home was known to none.  
As time rolled on I further strayed  
Through moory wastes or lonely glade.

Dear were the moors ! There oft I'd stroll,  
I felt them kindred to my soul,  
Companion in their emptiness,  
My outcast lot there pained me less.  
With widened range my interest grew,  
And on my life some sunshine threw.  
I sought the keeps of hoary eld,  
Traced Border raid and battlefield ;  
Lone Duddo's Tower—haunt of the shade  
Of murdered wife and injured maid ;  
Ford Castle walls and crumbling Wark,  
Where Scotland's left her arrow-mark ;  
And Norham fair greeting the day,  
Proud 'mid her garments of decay ;  
On Campfield's Slopes I'd earth-homes trace,  
The cradles of our daring race ;  
Dark Flodden Field I'd pensive tread,  
And see her ridges sown with dead,  
Till down my cheek would steal a tear  
At Scotland's glory on her bier.  
Black Greenlaw Walls held me spell-bound,  
For faith had here some utterance found ;  
Seven mighty stones, cliff-poised, there stand  
In silent gaze,—wards of the land,  
A Druid Fane of far-off days,  
Burdened with blood and altar-blaze,  
Where victims' screams for pitying aid  
Found roar and yell for answer made !  
Where now these throngs ? These stones alone  
All else forgotten and unknown !  
“ My little store I nursed with care,  
It found me books and partial fare ;  
But Till with generous hand supplied  
The food my scanty means denied.  
The 'gentle art,' like some good elf,  
Brought calm and lured me out of self.  
My pen gave wandering thought employ,  
And winged long hours with pensive joy.

But oft I'd ask at close of day,  
Was mine a noble part to play?  
Why not dare all and face my deed,  
Though to the death the path should lead?  
Might I not proud acquittal claim,  
Show Hay's dark guilt and Nancy's shame?  
My early love, her faithful years  
Would strike me dumb, till welling tears  
Would cry, 'Thy wife and children save,  
Here hide thy head; here find a grave!'

"This morn, oppressed, I brooding lay  
Amid the joys of opening day;  
The sun peeped through my ivy screen,  
And flaked the floor with flickering sheen;  
The forest rang with songs of love—  
Earth's morning hymn to heaven above;  
Then groaned I, Why mid scenes so fair,  
A bleeding heart should suffer here?  
In bitter wrath I cursed my lot,  
My only hope—to be forgot!  
Then o'er the floor—I gazed appalled—  
A loathsome viper slowly crawled,  
And on my hearth this baleful guest  
Its scaly form stretched out to rest.  
Then, startled! quick it raised its head  
As if to strike, then, wriggling, fled.  
'My fate! My tainted home!' I cried,  
'Foul reptile Hay—base Morningside!  
Why art thou dead that I might sate  
Once more my thirst—this hell of hate?'  
Some demon whispered, 'he survives,  
And earth refuses two such lives,  
Which of the two?' To-morrow's sun  
Has my resolve, then I'll——"

"Here," added Blythe, "the Journal ends  
And to the tale fresh mystery lends."

The strangers heard the bitter tale,  
The lady wept, the men were pale;

Then one low said :—"Before we go,  
Let me unfold what more I know.  
Squire Hay had heard of Lee's hard fate,  
Had secret saved his wrecked estate ;  
That grand . . . deed . . . done, he'd onward hied  
To bring 'good news' to Lee's fireside !  
The suffering wife felt all the bliss  
That rose from Murray's proud largesse,  
And, pure in soul, her arms she'd flung,  
And weeping on his bosom hung,  
Her words—her grateful heart's outflow,  
Lee's dread mistake—the jealous blow—  
The falling man—Lee's instant flight  
Now stand revealed in truth's pure light.

" Hay lived. An unseen, loving hand  
Had turned aside that murderous brand.  
Long weeks he lay, but his strong frame  
Rose victor in that life-death game.  
The myrmidons of law he hushed,  
And prying gossip sternly crushed.  
With generous soul his hours he gave  
Lee's shattered *House* and *name* to save ;  
And fortune showered her smiles once more,  
And blest the home she'd wrecked before.

" Hay, 'mid the roar near Thames' dark tide,  
Oft dreamed of youth and fair Tweedside.  
Then came resolve, he planned that he  
Would angle Tweed from source to sea.  
Where Coldstream holds her Border guard,  
He of a lonely Hermit heard ;  
Could it be Lee ? . . . I haste the end ;  
Once more he proved a noble friend,  
Found the lone outcast—gave that man  
Back to his home and love again !  
*There stands he now*,—my wife, the good,  
And I, the Hermit of the Wood !"

NOTE.—I have heard three versions of this tale, all evidently founded on one common tradition. The above is the best

form of the story. Lee bought the MS. from Blythe. I have been the means of getting the Cave marked in the Government Survey Map of Northumberland.

### THE STREAM.

See yon rill free glancing, gliding  
Like a thread of living light,  
From its lonely mountain-hiding,  
Babbling in its merry flight.  
In and out 'mid reeds and rushes,  
As a dream, its waters run,  
Covered with deep crimson blushes  
From the staring of the sun.

Now it plays with sweet briar's shadows,  
 Wooing ferns to love's embrace,  
As it singing haunts the meadows,  
Where on moonbeams fairies race.  
On its waves the shy coot lingers,  
Lilies bathe their petals fair,  
While the sun with golden fingers  
Glorifies the everywhere.

Here it runs with noisy prattle,  
There forgets its giddiness ;  
Or like love in playful battle,  
Storms its banks with many a kiss.  
Vale and mead their tribute sending  
Swell it to a mighty stream,  
O'er whose waves the poet bending,  
Wraps his soul in mystic dream.  
Clad in strength and lordly motion,  
Proudly rolls the silent river,  
Till it calmly finds the ocean,  
And the rest that resteth never.

This is life—no poet's dreaming !  
    Infancy with smiles and tears,  
Youth's bold steps mid plans and scheming,  
    And the strength of manhood's years.  
Heart joins heart in proud emotion,  
    Wedded love that nought can sever,  
Faith's proud altar—leal devotion,  
    Plighted troth, unchanged for ever.  
Then the eve of lifetime gathers,  
    In its worn-out vestments dressed,  
Breaks the cord, we seek our fathers  
    In the grave's lone silent rest.

## FRUITLESS EFFORTS NOT VAIN.

'NEATH Autumn's touch the green leaves pale,  
    And widowed Edens wail their flowers ;  
Then winter spreads his shroud o'er all,  
    And forests mourn through snowy hours  
The sheen that graced each leafy hall,  
    And nestled loves in thousand bowers,  
Yet nature stores each shattered gem,  
For coming summer's diadem.

A wreck the goring rock reveals,  
    That Calvary saves trade's wingéd throng ;  
And man, through fruitless labours, feels  
    That groans can teach as well as song ;  
And though 'neath wounds he fainting reels,  
    He hears,—“The purpose crowns ; be strong !  
You're nobler, baffled in the strife,  
Than dreaming through an aimless life.”

The strivings for some ungrasped thought,  
    The dying light that promised day,  
The baffled will that foothold sought,  
    The flowers of hope trod in the clay,



And wreckings, through our folly bought,  
Rouse manhood's shame—give purpose sway,  
Till rusted swords and dreamings vain,  
Rise darker forms of spirit-gain.

Though breathless, lone, 'neath curse of night,  
We tug with foes with panting breath,  
And agonize for morning light,  
While earth's cold sneer's thrown in our teeth,  
We heir, amid the thickening fight,  
A nobler birth from every death,  
Till angels from heaven's heights behold,  
The dross consumed and purged the gold.

The All-wise, hid within the veil,  
Counts all our falls and fruitless years,  
Takes in his love, howe'er we fail,  
Our spirit-aims, and to our fears  
His dear, "'Twas in your heart, though frail  
Your flesh and blood, your groans and tears,  
I know you not through what you've wrought,  
I know you but through what you've sought."

### OFF FROM THE CITY.

OFF from the city's throngs,  
Its maddening strife and guile,  
Its vice, its rags and wrongs  
That its dark streets defile.  
Here 'neath bright cloudless skies  
Peace reigns instead of strife,  
And endless glories rise,  
But, say,—Can this be life,  
Self-filled, enrapt, to stroll  
Mid nature's witching rest,  
While heavenward gathering roll  
The cries of earth's unblest?

Better the crowded street,  
Better the slums, the pain,  
The hunger, woe we meet,  
And men by vices slain ;  
Giving our little all  
To smoothe their pathway here,  
Some aids to those that fall,  
And words the faint to cheer ;  
Lighting the lamp of hope  
To some one sad and lone,  
A guide to those who grope,  
Touching some heart of stone,  
Waking some gleam of joy,  
Self for a while forgot,  
This, *this* is God's employ,  
The glory of our lot !  
Then be these idle hours  
But storing up of might,  
As warrior hoards his powers  
To nobler dare and smite !

## THE UNSEEN GUEST.

AN unseen guest at dewy morn,  
We know not whence or where,  
Moves through our hallowed bowers unheard,  
And plucks some lily fair.  
At growing day when youth's brave hand  
Is weaving hope's bright crown,  
He comes and wrecks the golden wreath,  
And smites the dreamer down.

In heyday of proud manhood's years,  
Pawning their lives for gold,  
He smites a sire ; and stately halls  
Mourn o'er their hearthstones cold.

At closing eve when stars watch earth,  
And day sleeps in the west,  
He gathers in a whitened sheaf,  
And gives the weary rest.

### GALASIDE.

#### A BALLAD.

O BONNIE rows sweet Gala's tide  
By mony a fairy knowe,  
Dear wi' auld tales o' trystin' hours  
In forest, haugh, an' howe ;  
But, O ! it has its sangs o' pain,  
An' weirds ower hamesteads dear,  
An' broken hairts in life's young morn,  
Mid a' its sunny cheer.

"I hear a voice," cried Lady Jean,  
"O nurse, it cries on me !"  
"The night is wild, my bonnie bairn,  
An' raves ower wud and lea ;  
But sair I wish 'twad blaw its last,  
It sough's sae weird and fey ;  
An' rowin' red the Gala flings  
Its waves frae bank to brae."

"I hear a step—a low, fause step,  
I hear a cry—a mane !"  
"It's but the ivy, dawtie dear,  
Beatin' the window pane.  
Your faither's voice will greet us sune,  
An' young Lord John be here—  
His gallant mien an' faithfu' love  
Your lanesome hairt will cheer."

"O there's a door been opened wide,  
A footstep's on the stair !"  
"It's but the wind in our big ha'  
O rest ye, Lady dear !

Nae wind or rain your faither fears,  
He'd daur the Solway tide,  
An' braw Lord John wi' him will come,  
An' busk ye for his bride."

"O there's a shadow flittin' near,  
O nurse, speak true to me."  
"It's but the cloud-drift ower the mune;  
What else, love, can it be?  
But O I wish that guid Sir James  
Were safe within this ha',  
An' stout Lord John were wi' him here,  
To guard an' cheer us a'."

"O, nurse! why dae ye kiss me sae?  
Your lips are icy cold!"  
"O Lady Jean, my hairt will break,  
You've borne the weird of old.  
Nae human lips e'er gie that kiss,  
An' thrice it has to fa',  
But wae's my hairt for Galaside,  
An' for its lordly ha'."

"O dool upon Lord John's forbear,  
That Yearl o' dreadfu' fame;  
An' for the dark, dark deed o' bluid,  
Upon his faithfu' dame.  
Her last, low words—'An thrice shall fail  
An heir to Galaside,  
An' my cauld lips will speak o' me,  
An' by whase han's I died'."

At dead o' nicht a youth was laid  
Upon a snaw-white bed,  
A villain hand had sped the blow,  
An' Jean's brave lord lay dead.  
She closed the wound in his cold breast,  
She kaimed his raven hair,

An' kissed his brow, but ne'er a tear  
Wet her young cheeks sae fair.  
She's gane into her ain lane room,  
But ere the mornin' tide  
Death closed her een, and in one grave  
They sleep by Galaside.

## WRITTEN ON AN APRIL MORNING.

EARTH wakes rejoiced, for spring again  
Gives hope her song, clothes mount and plain  
In spoils from winter won ;  
And builds a shrine—a glorious throne—  
A father's loving smile may own,  
And earn his dear—"Well done!"  
The sun's bright elves run through the woods,  
And gleesome poke the drowsy buds,  
And on the breezy air  
The droning bee his task renews  
And asks, "Can man, earth's lord, refuse  
His own high part to bear?"  
The daisies whisper from each vale,  
The briars voices give,  
The blackbirds pipe a witching tale—  
All call, "be up and live."  
Brave preachers these teachers,  
Sprung from the teeming sod ;  
They weigh me, they slay me,  
As faithless to my God.

His hand through these is touching me,  
The where, the how, I may not see,  
That secret is His own !  
Shall I unheed that loving sway,  
Whose voice proclaims a better day  
When trust will win its crown ?  
O laggard in the noble race,  
O blind, amid the light,

O faithless and unskilled to trace,  
Day nursling of the night !  
The nesting birds rebuke my cares,  
The flowers of patience speak,  
The rounding seasons shame my fears,  
And bid my trust awake.  
Unspoken, or broken,  
My song's to sorrow wed,  
Earth's gladness seems madness,  
Or say,—Is my heart dead ?

No grasp of God is full, complete,  
We upward move with stumbling feet,  
With dim and mist-wrapped sight,  
And as we grope, feel, comprehend,  
We see, receding still, the end,  
Dark, baffling all our might !  
Yon sea has troughs 'tween crest and crest,  
Eve bows to night's dark sway,  
But billows swell proud ocean's breast,  
And morn drives night away ;  
So clouds that drape the earnest soul  
Are but stern prophecies  
Of higher light, when backward roll  
The mist-wreaths from her eyes.  
O Mystery of Loveliness,  
O heart that feels for all,  
Whose eye surveys wide shoreless space,  
And marks a sparrow's fall ;  
Thy care still we share still,  
In life's dark rugged road,  
Our fears there, our tears there,  
Thy strength win for our load.

Life toils around. We grow, we build ;  
No acts ere die, but ever yield  
A glory or a shame !

We stand not, when the day is done,  
Where first we hailed its rising sun,  
And braced for labour's game.

\* \* \* \* \*

We groan,—'tis terrible to stand  
Pressing death's latch with trembling hand,  
Fronting the dread unknown ;  
But 'tis more terrible to live,  
For deeds to death its meaning give,  
We reap but what we've sown !  
Nothing is small ! The acorn holds  
Wide forests in its breast,  
Where birds will love and nest and sing,  
And hunted beasts find rest.  
*Good* is the heart's philosophy,  
The path the Master trod,  
The light that makes the pure to see  
The face of Very God !  
The generous thought to nobler grows,  
And goodness goodness feeds,  
Till hearts can find no sweet repose  
Till love fruits round in deeds.  
A look may fall as chilling frost,  
A word, worse than a blow,  
A deed may make a battle lost,  
And lay a struggler low.  
Though heedless or needless  
We wound or stop our ears,  
That slighting, that smiting,  
Will meet us through the years.

Hear then, my soul, spring's quickening strain  
Feel—*Forward* ! fire each lagging vein,  
Catch up its rousing song ;  
As she wipes winter's scars away,  
Redeem the past, love's flag display  
Amid earth's suffering throng !

In blessing we will bless our lot,  
 In giving we receive,  
 Each act will beautify some spot,  
 With us its fragrance leave.  
 Thus claiming and aiming  
 To fairer make some home,  
 Each deed here will speed here,  
 The prayer—"Thy Kingdom Come!"

THE EARL OF H—— TO HIS YOUNG  
 BRIDE.

My bride! In thy sweet smile  
 My all of bliss I meet!  
 My love, my life enchained, I lay  
 Low at thy feet.

No rose with sweetest blush  
 Stolen from the morning sky,  
 Nor lily fair with dewy lips,  
 With thee can vie.

I'm rich in thy pure love,  
 Earth wears a brighter sheen,  
 For in my heart's proud joy enthroned,  
 Thou reignest Queen.

Twin wandering streams when wed,  
 With grander glory roll,  
 And we to noblest aims will plight  
 Our blended soul.

"*At spes infracta*" still  
 My joyous song shall be,  
 And through glad morrows yet unborn,  
 I'll live for thee.

'Mid honour's sacred call,  
 And faction's selfish war,  
 Be thou, with all a woman's soul,  
 My guiding star.



Life's joyous morn is ours,  
 Far off our sun's decline ;  
 Till then of earth I ask no more,  
 Since thou art mine !

### LIFE'S STORY.

'Tis spring, and proud young songs arise,  
 For earth to life is waking ;  
 On outspread wings hope cleaves the skies  
 For my young morn is breaking ;  
 I ask the flowers :—can such hope die ?  
 The flowers in faintest breath reply—  
 “Yes, such hopes die.”

'Tis summer, and the meads and dales  
 Laugh mid their leafy glory ;  
 And opening years tell fairy tales  
 Of life's proud future story ;  
 I ask the woods :—are these dreams vain ?  
 They mourn,—their accents full of pain—  
 “Yes, such are vain.”

'Tis autumn and the breeze-toyed grain  
 Waves as a golden sea,  
 And sings of joy for toilers' pain,  
 And waiting crowns for me ;  
 I ask the winds :—will these decay ?  
 The wasting blasts like demons say—  
 “These will decay.”

'Tis winter, and the silent snow  
 Falls, nature all investing,  
 The grave me beckons, whispering low,  
 “With me is quiet resting,”  
 I ask the dead :—this ! not the end ?  
 The shrouded graves this answer send—  
 “No, not the end.”

“NEVERTHELESS, AFTERWARDS.”

HER. XII. II.

YES ! I smart 'neath short, sharp, “No !”  
Pride would have me my own master,  
Free to loiter or go faster  
    As my changing fancies flow ;  
    But 'tis better me to bend  
To a will all wisely guiding,  
With sweet love o'er all presiding,  
    And my good its final end.

Is there joy in earth's stern care ?  
Or in wrongs us keenly pressing,  
Wrongs ! which meet with no redressing,  
    And whose wail is, “doubt, beware ?”  
    Though the road be rough and long,  
This I'd have, 'mid tears, the rather  
Than, flower-strewn, without my Father,  
    And unsung my victor song.

'Mid the dark I walk with fear,  
Longing for the bright day shining,  
Or, storm-battered, grope repining,  
    Asking, “When will dawn appear ?”  
    Yet night's reign is brief. Our stay  
Is, at worst, a brief sojourning,  
One short hour will wake the morning  
    Of a bright and endless day.

Hard it is alone to stand,  
Harder still to fight a brother  
(When one hope's our common mother),  
    Teeth to teeth and hand to hand ;

Better far this mateless fight  
 'Mid the ties of friendship breaking,  
 With our life-cords thrilling, quaking,  
 When the cause is God and right.

Sing! I cannot, for around  
 Fruitless toils are thickly lying,  
 Cared-for flowers are dead or dying,  
 And sere leaves bestrew the ground;  
 But I'd rather toil unblest,  
 Than here sit with hands down hanging,  
 Rather hear destruction clanging  
 Than my hands have failed their best.

I must mourn. The tears will rise  
 For the dead—the brave, true-hearted,  
 And the grave of *one* departed,  
 Where my own heart broken lies;  
 But 'twere better here to weep,  
 Though we've lost our life's best treasure,  
 Loss may fruit in countless measure,  
 When our sickle comes to reap.

### MARJORY LOWE—A BALLAD.

FIERCE Haco, King o' Noraway,  
 Cam' ower the saut sea waves,  
 His thirsty sword gi'ed daith nae rest,  
 But sawed the land wi' graves.  
 An' fires made blush the midnight skies  
 An' dark the sun at noon,  
 An' castles fair at mornin's rise  
 Stood black brunt wa's at doon.

Our guid King spak', an' brave spak' he,  
 "Come, Scots, an' follow me,  
 We'll shed our hairts' best bluid, I trow  
 For hame an' our countrie."

They gathered east, they gathered west,  
An' hills an' dales atween ;  
An' mithers wept an' gi'ed their sons,  
For country an' for King.

Sweet Marj'ry wi' young Ronald stood  
Where Ayr rows to his rest,  
An' firmly to her breakin' heart,  
Her brave young lord she pressed.  
"O cheer ye up, my bonnie bird !  
An' dry your tearfu' e'e,  
The battle's brunt will spare your love,  
An' send him back to thee.  
He kissed her sister weepin' there,  
An' thrice he kissed his bride,  
An' now he's on his gallant grey  
Fordin' Ayr's siller tide."

"O sister, Jean ! hear ye my vow,  
I'll here sit e'en an' morn,  
An' count the weary empty hours,  
Till my true love return."  
Thrice slowly rase the gowden sun,  
An' thrice he sped the day,  
When news o' battle filled the air,  
Like moanin' o' the sea.

An auld man bent wi' grief an' wae,  
Low spak'—"Our King has won,  
But hearts will break in hut an' ha'  
An' mine for my brave son !"  
But love can hope where hope is vain,  
Can see where dark's the nicht—  
"Yonder my brave young Ronald comes,  
My tears maist blind my sight !"

But dark and red an' wild the Ayr  
Rins fu' frae bank to brae,

An' hungry waters frae the hills  
 Row in the lover's way.  
 He saw his Marj'ry wring her han's,  
 He heard her warnin' cry,  
 The water's roar spak' terrors vain,  
 Love made him a' defy.  
 O bravely fought that gallant steed,  
 But wilder fought the wave,  
 One long "Farewell!" an' neath the flood,  
 Young Ronald found a grave!

"Nae mair ye'll blast a hame," she cried  
 "Ye dark an' drumlie tide,  
 Or clutch the wean, or aged sire,  
 Or bridegroom frae his bride."  
 They've selt their ha', they've selt their lan's,  
 They've selt their jewels rare,  
 An' they ha'e biggit ower the flood,  
 The stour auld brig o' Ayr.

NOTE.—The busts of the two sisters were carved on the east battlement of the bridge, and were traceable at the close of last century.

### AT TWEED BRIDGE, PEEBLES.

WEAK from weary months of pain,  
 Let me share thy smile again;  
 Hold health's cup to fainting lips,  
 Wooing life with luring sips;  
 Draped in all thy summer charms,  
 Give me rest now in thine arms.

From thy heath and moorlands wild  
 Breezes waft, free, undefiled;  
 Let them fan my pallid cheeks,  
 Toss my hoar locks in their freaks,  
 Till I feel life's tides again  
 Pulsing through my every vein.

But thy scenes of endless beauty,  
Scattered by no stinting hand,  
Claim a brighter, nobler story  
Than my life's glass' sinking sand ;  
Not my song, my leaf in sear,  
But the visions mirrored here.

Peebles, hail ! Thy free-hand spirit  
Showers us welcomes everywhere,  
May the stranger guard this treasure  
As a gem worth all his care ;  
Hold it as a trust from heaven,  
Through a loving brother given.

Earth's "good morn" is joyous ringing,  
Flowers, sun-kissed, their incense shed,  
Crag and fell send lusty greetings,  
Songs from brooklets willow-hid ;  
Blend my soul with sight and sound,  
Lost in gladness floating round.

Tweed rolls out his free-born anthem,  
Venlaw his green banner waves,  
Lee-Pen lifts his wind-beat summit  
And wild tempests proudly braves,  
Neuk and glen and mead and strath  
Pour their offerings on our path.

Neidpath rears his turrets hoary,  
Shattered neath the tug of war,  
Telling Tweed the oft-told story  
Of each rent and crack and scar ;  
Left now in his evening days,  
For the idling stranger's gaze.

Say, ye scenes, what is your mission ?  
Aimless sport of rain and sun ?

Planless freaks of dumb, blind nature,  
 With no goal when day is done?  
 And the joy that fills my breast,  
 But an accident at best?

Low, deep voices love revealing  
 Rise from hill to daisied sod,  
 And through these my soul enraptured  
 Hears the footsteps of our God;  
 O He cannot hide from sight,  
 For His darkness teems with light!

Wordless songs of fell and mountain,  
 Waterfall and prattling rill,  
 While they mock my ear, earth-fettered,  
 Breathe their message to me still,  
 As the tribes that throng earth's sphere  
 Know the voice of smile or tear.

Glorious is their sinless worship,  
 Theirs no groping in the dark,  
 Each some light of God revealing,  
 Each one with His arrow-mark,  
 Their proud song of Him alone  
 Bursts in grandeur at His throne.

### THE RAINDROP'S SONG.

WHERE shall I fall? On some old wall,  
 And hasten its decay;  
 Or join some stream in summer dream,  
 And singing glide away?  
 Or will the grass catch, as I pass,  
 My tiny crystal form,  
 And from my lips steal little sips  
 To shield from noon-sun harm?

Or, lily's breast where sunbeams rest  
 And dream their happy dreams ;  
 Or on some wild—earth's outcast child—  
 Go with love's cheering beams ;  
 Or in an oak to feel the shock  
 Of tempests in their play ;  
 Or fall afar on mountain scar,  
 And be near heaven all day ?

Or shall I kiss some fairy miss  
 Forgetful of the shower ;  
 Or some old man at life's last span,  
 And cheer his closing hour,  
 And whisper,—rest when life is past—  
 And living streams above ?  
 Yes, there I'll fall and glad his soul  
 With thoughts of heaven and Love.

TO THE AUTHOR OF "*SPRING  
 BLOSSOMS.*"

SING on, sweet Bard ; thy youthful lays  
 Are prophecies of grander days,  
 And wings for higher flight,  
 When music of a nobler sphere,  
 And visions pure of realms more fair  
 Will flood thy song with light.  
 Dear nature holds thy soul in spell,  
 Her voices in thy *Blossoms* swell,  
 Her perfumes scent thy rhymes,  
 Her glories fire thy loving gaze,  
 Each smile or frown or fitful phase,  
 Finds welcomes in thy chimes ;  
 And deeper, in her mystic lore  
 You hear an Angel's voice,  
 Cleaving the wastes from some far shore,  
 To bid the sad rejoice.



We hurl back self and grasp our God,  
 And there find all our might.  
 The trial-trained are strong. They rise  
 Like giants roused from sleep,  
 With calm fair brow they front their skies,  
 And breast each frowning steep.  
 Round guarding and warding  
 Their onward, upward tread,  
 Earth owns them and crowns them,  
 Her noblest sons indeed.

Garner earth's voices as thy dower,  
 For Scotia's weal thy soul out-pour,  
 Hold dear a spotless life,  
 Seek to the light, keep hope aflame,  
 'Tis half of life's terrific game—  
 Heaven's banner in the strife ;  
 Our heroes through the vanished years,  
 Their deeds bequeath to you,  
 And martyrs point to flaming pyres  
 And shout, 'mid all, "be true !"  
 And hold the home aye holy ground—  
 A web by true hearts woven—  
 Where joyous love glads every sound,  
 A type sublime of heaven.  
 Rise, bear then, thy share then,  
 In earth's advancing toil,  
 Thy singing, sheaves bringing,  
 Will haste earth's harvest spoil.

As music sleeps in untouched lyre,  
 As grimy coal holds hidden fire,  
 Waiting their coming hour,  
 So sleeps the soul in iron bands,  
 Till touched by love's all-quicken hands,  
 It wakes and grasps its power.  
 No ages mete love's endless day,  
 It moves where sorrows tread,

The angels know its mighty sway  
Will die when God is dead.  
Let love then be thy monument,  
Scorn scorn, or base men's laugh,  
From what you've reaped and your intent  
God pens your epitaph.  
Thus storing and pouring  
Your heart in all your song,  
We'll name thee, proclaim thee  
Great 'mong our singing throng.

A MOTHER TO HER CHILD SLEEPING  
THE LAST SLEEP.

PASSED into life, my child,  
Turning from loves away ;  
Back from this wintry world,  
Back into brighter day ;  
Seeking thy home and thy Father's hand  
In the light and love of yon glorious land.

Thou wert a sacred flower  
Lent from that blessed sphere,  
To glad us for an hour,  
But not to blossom here ;  
For purer skies and a balmier air  
Were all too dear to a flower so fair.

But in thy tender leaves,  
With dews of heaven all wet ;  
Though they are withered now,  
A fragrance lingers yet,  
Bidding me see, 'mid my clouded night,  
Through death's dark shade a bright land of light.

Life's unknown path I'll tread,  
'Mid night I'll closer cling ;  
And when life's battle's won,  
And my freed soul takes wing

O'er death's dark stream, I shall reach that shore,  
Where sad farewells never break hearts more.

And thou wilt know me, dear,  
And, in love's rapture wild—  
Blessing my Saviour-God—  
I clasp my long lost-child,  
And read earth's tale in the light above,  
And see *this* grief but a higher love.

### FATHER IS NEAR.

As on a father's knee rests yon fair child,  
Struggling to word some fear in lisplings wild,  
Then the kind patting hand, the dear fond kiss,  
Burn up the goblin fear, bring back the bliss,  
And the strong, watchful love calms all the fear,  
Giving this only word—"Father is near!"

Darkly and doubting oft tramp we along,  
Giving a groan or sign,—no voice of song,  
All our unworded thoughts, loves and desires  
For the high life and true but dying fires.  
Then from the infinite voices of hope  
Speak of a coming day though we now grope;  
We in that unseen strength on without fear,  
Feeling it ours and true—Father is near!

### TO MISS M. L. ON HER MARRIAGE.

'NEATH evening's falling shadows  
I'd spend a peaceful hour,  
In listening to a songster  
That charmed my cottage bower.  
Oh, playful was that minstrel,  
With merry eyes and true,  
As if the summer heavens  
Had lent them light and hue.

That fairy bird would warble  
 Now in the wildest strain,  
 Then to sad notes would mellow,  
 As if it dreamt of pain.  
 Now here, now there, swift darting—  
 For ever on the wing—  
 It still its thrilling music  
 Upon the breeze would fling.

One eve 'twas strangely silent,  
 And gone its woodland glee,  
 When, low I heard a note-call,  
 From out a neighbouring tree.  
 My little pet sat listening,  
 The note-call seemed to say,  
 "With me, with me for ever,  
 My dear one come away!"

Excited, how it fluttered,  
 Its antics were a treat ;  
 They were so like a maiden's  
 With captive at her feet.  
 Off on swift wing it darted,  
 "I come !" its joyous song ;  
 And now my bower is silent,  
 And eve is very long.

# AFTER THREE PAINFUL INTER- VIEWS WITH—.

BE calm, my soul,  
 Might hath its little day,  
 This storm will o'er thee scatheless roll,  
 As spent waves die in spray,  
 And on thy path thy glad old sun  
 Will shine ere yet thy day is done.

Wouldst thou resign  
 Thy crown—the truth and right,  
 And bow, and feel no longer thine  
 Their joy and peerless might?  
 Wilt thou buy rest at evening's fall,  
 With fettered hand and stricken soul?  
 Earth hath no prize for man to win  
 Like heaven's fair smile and peace within !

Thy task of life  
 With thy old love pursue,  
 In silence scorn ignoble strife,  
 To thine ownself be true ;  
 For thee no choice, whate'er the cost,  
 No victor's he whose honour's lost.

Perhaps through thee,  
 And all thy bitter wrong,  
 Some soul may shout, " I'm free ! "  
 Some sigh break forth to song ;  
 For bleeding wounds in truth's stern strife  
 Baptize the race to new-born life ;  
 Have as of old this as thy goal,  
 Thy conscience monarch of thy soul !

## ON PASSING THROUGH A RAILWAY COLLISION,

*November, 1874.*

'MID noise and tramp, the to and fro,  
 The engine's shriek, the roar of train,  
 Where 'mid the race the clock beats slow  
 To hearts that long for home again,  
 Who loathe the strife—  
 The Babel-jar—that men call life,

I weary wait, and listless watch  
 The quick response to each demand,  
 Then, startled, gaze,—my breath I catch  
*That* ticket leaves a bloody hand!  
     I dream—I'm wrong,  
 For forward press the eager throng.

The hand once more the task essays,  
 A crowd is served; not blind these men?  
 My brain me duped—what ghosts we raise—  
     O God! the bloody hand again!  
     Appalled I stand,  
 For busy works that fateful hand.

Cold, sick, spell-bound,—One . . . two . . .  
     twelve . . . more!  
 What horror holds the "iron" way?  
 Must death leap wild, 'mid crash and roar,  
 And tramp in blood his hapless prey,  
     'Mid shriek and groan—  
 Man's last fierce prayer at mercy's throne?

My fate is near. What's heaven's behest?  
     'Tween me and it now stands but one!  
 My heart leaps frantic in my breast,  
     The hand—a bony skeleton!  
     Death's shadow's near,  
 I feel its chill and blanch with fear.

My ticket falls! No hand is there;  
 The future its dark secret veiled,  
 'Tis mine the death-winged hour to share,  
 And learn my fate 'mid men impaled!  
 'Tis come! dread crash! Death's hands me  
     spare!  
     I breathe again!  
 Now to my brothers in their pain.

## L'ENVOI.

In tender love from prying eye,  
Our changing lot in night is hid ;  
'Tis ours in faith to front our sky,  
For those pierced hands that for us bled  
Are ever near,  
To perfect strength and banish fear.

## THE WAIF TO HER CHILD.

ALONE, my child ! No pitying eye,  
No hand the lost to save,  
Night gathers 'neath a frowning sky,  
And *there*—the wave !  
What then for thee, my child ?  
Thy mother's bitter lot ?  
'Mid dangers dread and wild,  
By God and love forgot ?  
My past ? In squalor born and reared,  
Unknown a parent's care,  
My girlhood heart grew cold and sere  
In mute despair.  
Hungry 'mid wealth around,  
Naked 'neath winter's snows,  
No guiding voice I found  
To arm me 'gainst my foes.  
The comradeship of want,  
The craving to forget  
Were lurings to each haunt,  
Where misery misery met.

And one more step ! The downward road  
Is easy once begun ;  
Adrift from conscience, peace and God,  
Soon sank hope's sun.  
Hovelled in loathsome den,  
Dark night became my day,

'Mid hags and villain men,  
I sank as low as they.  
And on thy brow so sweet and fair  
Is writ a mother's guilt,  
And thy young heart a sword may bear  
Home to the hilt.  
My child! Thou shalt not tread  
The path my feet have trod;  
That wave has yet a bed  
To hide life's weary load.

One long, last hug! . . . My darling! . . .  
scared?

I'm mad, my reason's flown!  
*We cannot part!* O much I've dared,  
This, more! mine own!  
Fast fall my tears; thy face  
Is blotted from my sight;  
Life's woe, away! Our race,  
Be lost or won this night!

Thou smilest, crowest! Thy glad eyes—  
Twin stars of liquid night—  
Are seeing something in the skies  
That says, "Let there be light."  
My child, art thou God's messenger  
My fettered soul to free?  
That smile's not thine! I feel God looks  
Through it on me!  
I'm groping for his hand,  
Though stained with sin my brow,  
He points me to a fairer land,  
He bids me enter Now!

\* \* \* \* \*

Father, on me lay hold, arise,  
Thy smitten daughter hear,  
For this dear angel in disguise  
Life's all I'll dare!



Pledged in Thy strength I rise,  
 The night is past. A ray,  
 New-born, shines from the skies,  
 'Tis day, my God, 'tis day!

TO MR JOHNSTONE—A BROTHER  
 RHYMER, DALMENY PARK.

\* \* \* \* \*

I KNOW thy crave! How my dull soul  
 Has yearned some living thought to roll,  
     Clutched from truth's unseen hand;  
 To catch one spark of that pure flame  
 That writes in fire the *makkar's* claim  
     To aid his fatherland.  
 I've longed to break the bonds of clay  
     That wall us from each other,  
 To lift some soul to purer day,  
     By love's kin-touch of brother.  
 I've felt the power of cheering words,  
     The might of generous deeds,  
 And found a smile like songs of birds,  
     Or flowers 'mong noisome weeds;  
 And heartless tyrants' ceaseless blows,  
     Till flesh and blood rebelled,  
 And long afflictions' wintry snows,  
     My gathering cares have swelled—  
     These mind me and bind me,  
     Some prisoned soul to free,  
     Not sparing till sharing  
     Heaven's grand freemasonry.

Though high the peaks the song-gods scale,  
 And my slow feet lag in the vale—  
     My sight, a hemmed-in view,  
 Though genius spurns my rhyming art,  
 My song's the life-blood of my heart,  
     Low, simple, homely, true;

But if a doubting soul it cheer,  
 Lend courage to some hand,  
 And nerve some struggler 'mid his fear  
 For right or truth to stand,  
 I'll hold this untold bliss—  
 The crowning my desire—  
 A chain less, a pain less  
 Is surely angel hire.

I burn with shame, for wormling man  
 Dares weigh his God, pronounce earth's plan  
 A soulless, heartless fate ;  
 When past and future are unknown,  
 The Why? that mystery still God's own,  
 And He His hour can wait.  
 Man is the demon whose dark hand  
 Has rung each passing knell,  
 His baleful tread wrecks half the land,  
 And makes an Eden hell.  
 Vice sows, and reaps a wasted frame,  
 Drink swells his ghastly roll,  
 And wages squandered clothe in rags,  
 And brutalize the soul.  
 Would man rise 'bove his sordid self,  
 Hear all earth's claims and close  
 With duty's call, the desert then  
 Would blossom as the rose.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let's crown our day ; let's sing our song,  
 And be no grumbler 'mid life's throng,  
 However dark our sky ;  
 The trusting heart aye sees His face ;  
 'Mid sun or gloom will foot its race—  
 The prize-time's by and by !  
*Good* gives its burden, toil and pain,  
 And rugged paths to run,  
 Before we find the after-gain,  
 And harvest fields be won.

*Wrong* flings its gilded joy-bait first,  
And rimming fills the bowl,  
Then leaves its scorpions dark, accursed,  
To pierce the sinking soul.  
Let's live then, and give then  
A song in silent deeds,  
In measure a treasure,  
Our Father loving heeds.

We have our joy. Whate'er our lot,  
The muse keeps warm each tender spot  
That nestles in our breast ;  
Glad minstrels cheer us on our way,  
Our very darkness whispers day,  
And trial coming rest.  
The wordless songs of sea and fell,  
Of waterfall and flowery dell  
Arouse my dormant soul,  
As trumpet, drum, or bugle-call  
Fires heroes on to win or fall,  
In battle's awful roll.  
Live culling flowers, tramp down the weeds,  
Joy in earth's sunny skies,  
Hail friendship's dower, sow mercy's seeds,  
And all earth's blessings prize.  
There's beauty in the hearts that find  
A song in stormy sea,  
There's glory in an upright mind  
Surmounting poverty ;  
There's grandeur in a soul possessed  
Of goodness, love and trust,  
Towering above some dark behest  
That sinks slaves to the dust.  
Then, up our banner,—trust our God !  
He knows our every lot,  
And if His "strange work" be the rod,  
His grace is not forgot.

Thus thinking, and linking  
Our own with other's gain,  
Our rhyming and chiming  
Are God-gifts not in vain.

## YOUTH'S SONG.

Now hope fires our young eager spirits,  
And joy adds swift wings to the day,  
And woods raise their voices in chorus  
From choirs hid in homes 'mong their spray ;  
Their joy like a charm settles o'er us ;  
A kingdom of love in their lay ;  
And we brave to the task set before us,  
And our debt to the years we will pay.  
Then sing for the young and the hopeful,  
Brave songs for the battle of life ;  
A song for the valiant who conquer,  
And aids for the faint in the strife.

We'll twine love around all our doings  
As woodbine the old battered tree,  
Where boughs sport their gay borrowed glory,  
And odours on winds scatter free.  
While suns tell of labour's proud story,  
And harvests from land and from sea ;  
And our sowings will bless some glad reaper  
Who will joy in the years yet to be.  
Then sing for the toilers around us,  
The wrestlers with wind and with wave,  
The healers of souls that are sinking,  
The hands that are mighty to save.

O where have the flowers got their garments ?  
A bow have they stolen from the sky,  
And with fairy hands culled its beauty  
Till stars pale their glow with a sigh ?

NORTON'S TEMPTATION—  
SUPPOSED TO BE NARRATED BY HIMSELF.

IN dusky shade I musing lay,  
And idly watched the closing day ;  
The slumb'rous eve crept noiseless round,  
And rocked to sleep toil's grinding sound.  
The languid breeze, the balmy air  
Wove fancy dreams and visions fair ;  
The blackbird and the shy stock-dove  
Told all the glades their tales of love ;  
While woodbines and sweet bridal may  
Rained fragrance on the parting day ;  
And dews on flowers light kisses pressed,  
And every thing sang love and rest.  
Soft languors dallied with my soul  
And whispered, " Love is life's high goal ! "

Then fitful through the listening trees  
Came faintest music on the breeze,  
No angel harp with softer mood  
E'er broke the reign of solitude ;  
The listening echoes sought the strain,  
It mocked their wiles, their search was vain ;  
As wearied infant sinks to sleep,  
As evening breeze dies on the deep,  
So sank the unseen minstrel's strain,  
Then woke the empty night again.  
My ear would catch some louder note,  
Then silence round again would float,  
Sighing and dying o'er and o'er  
Like wavelets on a level shore.  
A charm, half pain, around it hung,  
Wherein sweet sadness found a tongue.  
Then louder song exultant fell,  
Pulsing with joy's tumultuous swell ;  
It thrilled, it flamed. A ravishment  
Of unknown bliss was through me sent.

Half raised, I strained my eager ear,  
My heart beat wild,—'twas drawing near ;  
Then rose a voice voluptuous, young,  
Love was the theme, and thus it sung :—

“Where sleeps my love, where sleeps my love?  
Ye woods in pity tell ;  
I pine away until the day  
When love with me shall dwell ;  
O love, love, love !  
When thou with me shalt dwell.

“Where dreams my love? What dreams my  
love?  
Shall I his kisses share?  
My heart's aflame, I breathe a name  
For one alone to hear ;  
O love, love, love !  
For him alone to hear.”

Then from the grove a maiden tripped,  
Her step—an airy song—  
Her garments like a gauzy veil,  
Half-hiding round her clung ;  
I feared to breathe lest I should scare  
This witching vision, young and fair.

She turned—one glance ! Like timid deer  
She fled some steps away,  
But lagging feet and winning smiles  
Seemed whisper, “bid her stay !”  
Choking with love, I pleading cried,  
“O maid divine, come to my side !”

“O happy youth ! half of the truth  
Thy love-taught lips have spoken,  
Thou'rt not alone, I blushing own,  
For thee my heart's nigh broken ;

And elves my pain divining,  
In dreams shewed me beneath a tree,  
My waiting love reclining."

Beneath her spell love burned. I vowed—  
I clasped her beck'ning hand,  
"My soul, my all, I give to thee,  
With thee, 'tis to command,  
I heaven forego, I hell defy,  
For thee I'll live, with thee I'll die!"

Low sighs the gloomy forest filled,  
And clouds the heavens unstarred,  
The wood-choirs hushed their mellow notes,  
And raven croaks were heard  
While laughter crashed hoarse through the air,  
That hell's dark caves alone might hear.

Then through the shades a young man pressed,  
I panting held my breath,  
As in mine ear he whispered low,  
"Be faithful unto death,  
A crown awaits each victor here,  
In His might live; thy God is near!"

Then on the Sylph a fierce light fell,  
That flash my soul illumed,  
I saw, held in by iron bands,  
Her heart, black, half consumed,  
While howls retreating through the gloom,  
Told of lost spirits fleeing doom.

Her robes, mud-stained, in rags hung round,  
Her golden locks were grey,  
Her brow with passion's hand was scarred,  
Her eyes flashed, hate, dismay;  
I loathed myself! Could *this* me win?  
What gain has death; what crown hath sin?

Rescued ! I turned to bless this friend ;  
My lips refused to speak,  
My tale of shame and pain they left  
To tears that wet my cheek ;  
Then burning grief my bosom tore,  
A Crown of Thorns the stranger wore !

### A CHILDHOOD FEAR.

FAR back in childhood's morning  
When faith knew not to cavil,  
Our heads were crammed with stories  
About a foe—the devil ;  
Of all his ways and dealings  
With saint and hoary sinner,  
Now by some " black-coat " baffled,  
Now o'er some waif a winner.

We drew him cloven-footed,  
Horned, grim, black in and out,  
And who to catch us mortals  
Roamed ever round about ;  
And in dark holes and corners  
We timidly were peeping,  
Expecting every moment  
To see him on us leaping.

O, how our little bosoms  
Would palpitate with fear,  
As through the brooding darkness  
Some rustling met our ear ;  
Or, in our dreams we saw him,  
And screaming would awake,  
And hide beneath the blankets,  
And in our terror quake.



But now my raven ringlets  
 Have faded into gray,  
 And all that horrid fancy  
 For ever's passed away ;  
 Till now the darkest midnight,  
 Whatever be its evil  
 Of crime, of feud or ruin,  
 Has nothing of the devil ;  
 And yet *some* darkening presence  
 Still haunts the path I tread,  
 I feel each hour his lurings,  
 The fear alone is dead.

### TO A TEACHER SUFFERING A MEAN PERSECUTION.

THE memories of vanished years  
 In thee have life again ;  
 Their sunny joys, their hopeful songs,  
 Unmarred by grief or pain ;  
 Yet hours uncrossed by care or strife  
 Existence give, but never life.

Ring, ring the joy-bells merrily,  
 (I'll love them to the last),  
 That memory hangs in all the halls  
 That crowd the dear old past ;  
 I catch their chimes, their throbbing lay,  
 And make their music bless to-day.

Hoard up thy joys, for toil and care  
 Fight hard to drown their voice,  
 And bid us mourn through sunny June,  
 When heaven and earth rejoice ;  
 Ingrates we are ! One rainy day  
 Wipes out our summer's glad array.

Now sorrow clouds thy little world,  
 Thy past looks through the years  
 With sad enquiring eyes, and asks  
 Thee why? Your answer—tears!  
 If conscious of thy high task done,  
 Though thou art down, thou still hast won.

A priest thy foe! What hate on hate  
 Can 'neath the cassock burn!  
 Trampling some wretch with iron heel,  
 God help him, if he turn.  
 O Christ! Our hearts cry in despair  
 "Is this the fruit the Cross should bear?"  
 Or, bleeding, send this maddened cry,  
 "Is God asleep that right should die?"

Thy Crown's not lost. Bear, work and wait  
 The years will give, "Well done!"  
 Thy harvest fields will crush thy foe—  
 A silent victory won.  
 Our sickle on yon better land  
 Will miss no sowings of our hand.

\* \* \* \* \*

Who mined our gems—our store of thought?  
 The dead have in these shared,  
*Ours* is alone our soul's intent,  
 And what our hearts have dared;  
 "*Sic vos non vobis*" through all shores  
 Give golden sheaves to other's stores.

Time rears his dome. Each tested stone  
 Is needed to the pile;  
 We dare be silent 'mid our task,  
 And urge our unseen toil;  
 And close our eyes at setting sun,  
 Rich in the thought of duty done.

Be all a man and self-forgot,  
 Howe'er thy life be spent,  
 Brimful of woman's tenderness  
 With manly courage blent ;  
 Then in thy weakness thou art strong,  
 Thy silence, in God's ear, a song !

Each true-born son must ever brunt  
 His own Gethsemane,  
 Fight for the right, though wrath should rage  
 Around his Calvary.  
 No flowery path awaits true life,  
 Whose food and air is mortal strife ;  
 The voice within which judges all,  
 Must be our guide though kingdoms fall.

Somewhere, an hour of life or death  
 Must meet each earnest soul,  
 When right must measure arms with wrong,  
 In blood though garments roll,  
 Where "*truce*" must never stain the breath,  
 A backward step—a pause—is death !

Life is divine ; unborn for ease,  
 Our foes awake its power,  
 When man oft lives in his dread fight,  
 A lifetime in an hour ;  
*Thought* makes the years in life's strange roll  
 And counts the pulses of the soul.

Be strong. Come soon, for free to you's  
 The roof-tree of my dwelling ;  
 Come, test this truth,—our very woes  
 Lose half their pain in telling.  
 I, too, have bled 'neath wrong's foul dart,  
 And know the pangs that pierce your heart,  
 Yet stronger now through all my pain,  
 I only know the scars remain.

TO THE REV. TIM TWADDLE.

ONLY a half hour's talk,  
 Only a soulless prayer,  
 An hour of penance by the flock,  
 Or just to say they're there.

Only a few short years  
 And all will journey hence,  
 And "hireling" shepherds then in tears  
 Will reap their recompense.

Here Manse is more than Creed,  
 Men's homage more than faith,  
 The Stipend more than Churches' need,  
 The only drawback—Death !

WRITTEN DURING A STORMY NIGHT.

O'ER the deep there is night, and a wild unrest  
 Raves fierce in its wrath o'er the ocean's breast,  
 And the winds into foam tear the fleeing waves,  
 As they rush in despair to their rocky graves ;  
 For the demon of storms drives the steeds of the gale,  
 And shouts in his glee at the shivering sail ;  
 Then a mighty " Be still," and he draws his rein,  
 And the sea, worn and pained, sinks to sleep again.

There are storms and dread nights in the human soul,  
 Each breast knows its own and their endless roll,  
 As they beat now in woe on the mind's dark throne,  
 Or thunder their wrath in a curse or groan,  
 When this life looms a jest, and our day-dreams vain,  
 Our plans doomed to wreck amid galling pain,  
 Till earth's heaven lies in death where no passions  
 crave,  
 Or e'er break the lone rest of the dreamless grave.

As of old 'mid life's storms and its dowry—pain,  
 The grand "Peace, be still" brings sweet calm  
 again;  
 And the clouds flee our sky and the glad old sun  
 Dries up all our tears ere the day is done;  
 And the soul finds a rest from the tossing wave,  
 As she hears "For I live," at the mouth of the  
 grave,  
 For a might waits the cry of the soul that wills,  
 'Neath the shade and the strength of th' eternal  
 hills.

### TWEEDSIDE.

The closing of a Lecture on "Wark Castle," delivered  
 before the Edinburgh Borderers' Union, 27th October 1893.

HAIL, glorious land! Here feasts my soul!  
 Thy sunny joys are mine,  
 Where hills are songs, the very winds  
 A breath of the divine;  
 And gold-fringed clouds at setting sun  
 Seem garments of the Unseen One!

The Cheviots roll their noon-day psalm,  
 Peace haunts thy sunny rills,  
 And love broods o'er the homesteads warm  
 That nestle 'mong thy hills;  
 While towering in the western skies  
 Cleft Eildon's peaks as guardians rise.

The glad songs of thy streams inspire  
 Our hearts when sinking low,  
 And whisper in our deadened ear,  
 "O child, forget thy woe;  
*He* leads our waters to their rest.  
 Art thou less dear? He knows what's best."

Hast thou, dear land, some mystic power  
    To thrill our longing breast,  
And bid away earth's fretting care,  
    And on thy bosom rest,  
Till tears are dried beneath thy wile,  
And sadness breaks into a smile?

The forests climbing up thy hills,  
    Thy vales by poets trod,  
With broomy knowes and laughing streams,  
    Send greetings up to God ;  
No envious voice 'mid all their choirs,  
But gladness all their song inspires.

My childhood's home ! Can I forget  
    Scenes ever dear to me ?  
Their memories woven in my soul  
    Shall still my treasure be ;  
They nursed my fancy's early play,  
As flowers are nursed by smiling day.

Behind the hills of hoary years  
    Lies sun-clad youth's bright vale,  
Where life, new from a better land,  
    Wove heaven in hope's bright tale ;  
A resurrection voice I hear,  
    The past throws wide her gate,  
And from that shadow-land the loved  
    Unchanged around me wait,  
And o'er my loss I shed a tear,  
Yet, loving, breathe heaven's atmosphere.

Through thee, dear scenes, I stretch my hands  
    Into the bright unseen,  
And clasp in faith my vanished love,  
    Though death rolls dark between ;  
And in this joy my setting sun  
I'll calm await till day is done.

## THE ANGELS—SLEEP AND DEATH.

*Death.* Angel of Sleep, all hail !

*Sleep.* Servant of God, my stronger brother, hail !

*Death.* O blest's thy hallowed task as summer  
showers

To nature's parched lips ! Thy presence wins  
The smile of kings and prayers of sinking slave.  
The boy, worn out with play, and age, bowed down  
With hoary years, court thy embrace, and kiss  
Thy sweet refreshing lips. Here beauty woos  
Thy circling arms in restful trust ; there toil  
Enclasps thy hand and feels thy pulse thrill all  
His lagging veins. Health waits thy silent sway  
And sickness, yearning pleads the shadow of  
Thy healing wings. You bid the babe forget  
His toys, and weave him dreams of light and love ;  
But mine's to wipe the rose from his fair cheek,  
Bid light fade from his eye, marble the lips,  
And dry the bubbling fount of life and give  
The mother's bosom emptiness and woe.  
The cup of life, held in young manhood's hand,  
I dash to earth, and watch the aged sire  
Asking the dumb, dark tomb, "What meaneth this ?"  
I winter all man's hopes ; and his bright skies,  
Shouting of harvests yet to be, are draped  
In sackcloth at my gaze. The air I breathe  
Is wearied with men's groans and fruitless prayers.  
My steps are graves. I reap, 'mid bursting hearts,  
The harvest of the world, my sheaves—the race !

*Sleep.* Weep not—no tearless eye is thine ! Thy  
task

Is love, for He is Love, though unto men  
Thy *must* speaks forth a sterner sway than my  
Low voice. He knows aright, who gave thee bid  
The spirit home. Proud man (that miracle  
Of dross and gold), dull in the school of faith,

Mistakes thy mission and his own. I but  
Restore a little strength which other toils  
Will waste, as night wipes out the flowers. But thou!  
Thou bid'st the weary lay their burden down  
And sleep. Life's stern campaign is o'er, and sweet  
Forgetfulness now summers all with flowers.  
Then sighs and groans break into grateful song ;  
And on yon further shore, on mother's lips  
The long-lost child returns the parting kiss  
She gave on time's rough strand. And these young  
    graves,  
Which stumbling reason calls a blunder, rise  
But nearer paths to life. And man's high soul,  
Battling like prisoned bird, against her bonds  
Is free at thy one touch. As slaves forget  
The rasping of the file that breaks their chain,  
So, freedom won, the touch of thy rough hand's  
Forgot. Then high, strong winged, man cleaves  
    heaven's day  
And reads the mystery of life and death  
In light that fills with heavenly ravishment.  
And that poor dust that men the body call,  
Now scattered o'er thy chamber floor, shall rise  
On that glad morn that links eternity  
To time, and, clad in robes of peerless light,  
Shall stand—time but remembered as a dream—  
Heir of the years that count the life of God !

*Death.* Brother, adieu ! You to your welcome work,  
I to my shrouded task, to sow 'mid tears  
And questioning hearts my seed, but songs will greet  
The storing of my ripened sheaves. Farewell !

### TO AN ANNUAL FLOWER.

BUT one summer is thine and in one bright glow  
Thy swift fleeting powers expire,  
As a mind consumes all its heavenly dower  
In one glorious flash of fire,



And a soul weds a soul, and they live—are one,  
One death is the death of twain,  
And a heart that has loved as mine has loved,  
Can it ever love again ?

"CHRIST IN ME."

"CHRIST in me," such glorious teaching  
From these words are often heard,  
That a reading by a layman  
Cannot claim a high regard.  
"Christ in me the hope of glory,"  
No dead works my soul can free ;  
He, my hope, my life, my day's-man,  
But this Christ must live in me.

All His love, submission, beauty,  
Self-denial—grace for grace,  
Must in me have answering feature  
As in water, face to face.  
Growing in each true endeavour  
Purer in my life and aims,  
Sinking self and earthly glory,  
These His love for ever claims.

We are Christs to one another,  
Sacrifice our noblest praise ;  
Silent service—known if must be—  
Be the flowers that strew our ways.  
At our feet, unconscious waiting,  
Planned by love's unerring hand,  
Lies our burden ; let us lift it,  
Urged by pleasure, not command.

Though thy cup be deep and bitter,  
Childlike bend the willing knee ;  
"As Thou wilt Lord," then its draining  
May some fettered captive free.

Though thy tears as thine are counted  
 By the passing heedless throng,  
 They are thine, yet they are other's,  
 That some voice may burst in song.

Angels from the heaven-doomed city  
 Dragged the slow, reluctant Lot,  
 Be an angel to some laggard,  
 Dreaming in some fatal spot.  
 Every burden lifted, lightened,  
 Every good to bleeding woe,  
 Is a Christ-act, and its birth-hour  
 Heaven's high register will shew.

What is Creed, Sect, Church-supporting  
 With a heart to love unwed,  
 But a lie ! whate'er your seeming,  
 Christ is nothing—Christ is dead ?  
 Yes, thy crown must have its jewels,  
 These are won and set on earth,  
 And if Christ your soul has quickened,  
 You must aid some second birth.

Earth is groaning, ease her sorrow ;  
 Weeping, wipe away her tears ;  
 Struggling, falling, nigh despairing,  
 Rouse her hope and quell her fears.  
 O the Godlike joy of blessing !  
 Glory great to mortals given ;  
 And this Christ lived in His servants,  
 Lifts earth to the gates of heaven !

ON LIEUT.-COL. HARE OF CALDER  
HALL, WEST LOTHIAN,  
REMITTING A HALF YEAR'S RENT TO HIS  
TENANTS BECAUSE OF THE WET SEASON  
OF 1886.

WELL done ! On many an Indian field  
Thy sword for Queen was proudly held—  
A voice of death or friendly shield,  
Till treason's doom was sternly knelled.  
Now, thine to hold the breach, and aid  
The struggling 'gainst the conquering years,  
Till rain-sprites wield a useless blade,  
And, baffled, low reverse their spears !

You heard the yet unuttered cry  
(Before it broke upon the air),  
Of stricken men ; thy help was nigh,  
And answered all their unvoiced prayer.  
With lightened hearts and love aflame,  
Hope forward leads glad, grateful men,  
And in their hearts they write thy name,  
And clutch their arms for bread again.

ON READING A POEM—"A SEARCH  
FOR GOD."

"COME, longing souls," our pastor pled,  
"Though rough the road  
And clouds loom dark o'erhead,  
We'll earnest seek for God ;  
Somewhere his presence haunts our sod,  
There at his feet we'll lay our load."

Height after height we scaled in pain,  
Hope sinking low,  
Fearing our toil was vain,

Mid wearied step and slow,  
Clouds thickening round, no cheering bow,  
Our tears, our toil—one bitter "No!"

Then dazzling glory downward shone,  
Upward we pressed,  
A holy gladness urging on  
To gain the longed-for quest,  
No fruitless race our feet have run,  
Here's answered prayer! Our prize is won!

Our pastor heard a voice; we stood  
Waiting to hear;  
"We've erred," he said, "our road  
Retrace, nor doubt nor fear,  
The lowly heart to Him is dear,  
And in the vale He's very near."

Then back we, fainting, toiled our way,  
Till in a glen,  
A cot 'mid leafy spray  
Stood far from busy men,  
Peace wrapped it in her mystic ken,  
Unknown to pencil, song or pen.

A father, wife and child dwelt there—  
Sprung from the sod—  
Thankful for daily fare,  
And love—no weary load,  
But as a fount it welling flowed;  
"Look," said our pastor, "there is God!"

Morn found me back, and this my prayer,  
"Dear human love  
Art thou my heaven all fair?  
O, ever strongly prove  
Thy life divine—a changeless groove  
For erring feet—thou brooding dove!"

The cot was hell, all dark, dread woe,  
Dear peace had fled,  
'Neath husband's murd'rous blow  
The young wife dying bled !  
O'er cleric-dreams I bowed my head  
And groaned, " My parson's God is dead ! "

## MY LOVE AND I.

At morn we watched the silver sea  
With ripples kiss the strand,  
Our hearts blent with the melody  
That wandered 'long the sand ;  
And bending soft the blue sky hung  
Like mother o'er her child,  
And clouds slept there with folded wing,  
Nor dreamt of tempests wild ;  
A hallowed peace ensouled the scene,  
We plighted love amid the sheen.

'Twas eve, and wildly o'er the deep  
The angry tempest reigned,  
And frenzied waves towered heap on heap,  
And groaning seas were pained ;  
The trembling shore quailed 'neath their tread,  
The clouds fled wild with fear,  
And stars behind the sky-drift hid,  
At ruin's dread career ;  
That storm I 'joyed in wrath and groan,  
She'd faithless proved,—I stood alone !

*IN TENEBRIS.* QUESTION AND ANSWER.

O EARTH, what woes thy garment stain,  
What unblest age, what young lives seared,  
What fruitless toil, what shadow gain,  
What battles fought and dangers feared,

What wrongs await each rising sun,  
And morn hands night her task undone ;  
I ask the *why* at heaven's high gate,  
But angels bid me "Stand and wait !"

My scanty fare life's strength demands,  
Harassing thought drives sleep away,  
And morn will rise on weary hands,  
While new-born tasks will crowd the day ;  
Till maddened brain and heavy eye  
Would count it bliss to sleep or die,  
While watching angels at heaven's gate,  
But whisper low, "Child, stand and wait !"

Why droops the flower ere yet it blooms ?  
Why spring false hopes to urge men on ?  
And why, thou earth, all marred with tombs,  
And light from homesteads ever gone,  
Till baffled faith both doubts and fears  
That prayers are vain, and useless, tears ?  
That hell is master of our fate,  
While angels pitying bid me wait ?

Has some rash builder toiled in vain,  
High dowered to dream and plan sublime,  
But weak to rear a perfect fane,  
And rule it through the wastes of time ?  
Or does he front some foe unknown,  
Whose arm is mightier than his own ?  
Is man the victim of a lie,  
Or God asleep in some far sky,  
I trembling ask at heaven's barred gate,  
But angels whisper, "Trust and wait !"

Some voice is shrieking in the storm,  
Thy hills and seas have truths to tell,  
The laughing flowers that grace thy form,  
And mutterings of the babbling rill

Have all some tale to warn or cheer,  
 But I'm as one that cannot hear ;  
     I ask the key at heaven's high gate,  
     But angels bid me "Stand and wait."

Within, a proud and traitor heart,  
     My virtues seem but vice asleep,  
 At coward acts I guilty start,  
     And in my helpless anger weep ;  
 While self but girds with firmer chain,  
 And every struggle whets my pain ;  
     I freedom ask at heaven's high gate,  
     But angels bid me "Stand and wait."

Each light attained but makes me see  
     A thicker darkness deepening round ;  
 The past reveals not what's to be,  
     And leaves me still on unknown ground ;  
 Till wisdom, search, and anxious care  
 Are but a breath of passing air.  
     Why night ? I ask at heaven's high gate,  
     But angels pause and answer "Wait."

Somewhere, O earth ! I have a home,  
     Sometimes I deem a Father near,  
 And yearning hunger, while I roam  
     And cry aloud for heavenly fare ;  
 I cannot, dare not, bid these rest,  
 Through them I feel I must be blest ;  
     But why unfilled ? At heaven's high gate  
     I ask ; but angels bid me "Wait."

## ANSWER.

O child of reason asking sight  
     Where faith and hope are best for thee ;  
 God safely leads through time's dark night,  
     And to the end his love can see.

God is a man of war ; Arm, rise  
 And make thy life faith's sacrifice ;  
 With trusting heart seek heaven's high gate,  
 And with the angels stand and wait.

Go, live to men the Christ you know,  
 The beautiful in life unfold,  
 Make words with human love to glow,  
 Do Godlike acts more worth than gold,  
 For life is terribly sublime,  
 And heaven but harvests toils of time ;  
 This is thy light from heaven's high gate,  
 'Tis best for thee to work and wait.

Know all thy darkness whispers light,  
 Thy wanderings here, a blissful rest,  
 Thy struggle, victory in the fight,  
 Thy turmoil, heaven and peace at last ;  
 He knows the "need be" for each care,  
 And answers when denying prayer ;  
 With faith then stand at heaven's high gate,  
 And live the angels' watchward "Wait !"

### TO A MINISTER WHO STRIVES TO SET CLASS AGAINST CLASS.

Love is true life, and brotherhood  
 Is love sublimed to fact ;  
 Each man, a power to aid the right—  
 God lived in every act ;  
 Deeds are the features of the soul,  
 And "father it" in times life-roll ;  
 These give alone  
 The Christ-name to the man, Mess John.

Preacher of Christ ! Thy little soul  
 Breathes envy, malice, hate ;  
 You urge the beggar curse the man  
 Who feeds him at his gate ;




You every grace in toiler find,  
To wealth's just claims you're strangely blind;  
Yet Christ you own,  
Where taught thy Master this, Mess John?

Has capital no wrongs from toil?  
No strikes, no risks to run?  
No falling marts, no worthless debts,  
No workman's task ill done?  
No panic crash, no discount's rise  
Where honest worth oft sinks and dies?  
Away that sneer!  
For right, Mess John, I'm fighting here.

Thrice aids for sick I asked of thee,  
How did thy heart respond?  
Thy knitted brow or whining tone  
Denied thy brother-bond;  
Repulsed, to wealth I turned in pain,  
And, as of old, sought not in vain;  
O fraud! be dumb,  
And hide thy head till "kingdom come!"

I'll prayer thy words:—"O Lord, the rich  
Are reptiles in our sight,  
Scatter their gold and on their halls  
Red ruin burning write.  
The dross who love a life of ease,  
We dare not bid them till,  
Yet high their claims on toil's fair store  
Have they not mouths to fill?  
Let social earthquakes all untie  
Let plunder live and order die!"  
For once, truth own,  
This is thy Creed, unuttered, John.

My father's care, my toil-bought gains  
Are my true heritage;



And heaven's "well done!" is mine, not his  
Whose life's a worthless page ;  
Withhold my right to claim my own,  
And labour's call and thrift are gone ;  
Then Angels' tears  
Would fall 'mid devils' cheers, Mess John.

Arise, be light to struggling minds,  
Lure down the rich as brothers,  
Bid sober lives back honest toil,  
Thy life—be aiding others ;  
Rouse holy rage to rise and heir  
The light where they now grope ;  
Nature with thousand tongues proclaims  
Self-help's heaven's bow of hope ;  
Then rich and poor thy name shall bless,  
A friend, a guide to hallowed peace,  
And round God's throne,  
Angels with joy thy works will own.

### THE BOY BY THE BROOK.

A boy sat by a rippling brook,  
Where sunflakes' elfin feet  
Left golden footsteps, till it flashed  
A star-strewn, flickering street ;  
A new joy thrilled his glad young heart,  
As if of light he were a part.

Deep in dark pools—sweet haunts of rest,  
The willows' shadows slept,  
And crawfoot dipped their golden cups,  
As round their banks they crept ;  
And ferns, gemmed with a pearly spray,  
Watched minnows in their merry play.

The light and shade now found a voice,  
The withered leaf a tongue,  
And harmonies with contrasts blent,  
Around their glories hung ;  
He knew not whence, nor why, nor where,  
His soul was thrilled and heaven was near !

A voice low whispered in his soul—  
“ O for a painter’s ken  
To wed this glory to the years,  
And give this hour to men—  
This song in being ! this last ode  
Fresh from the bosom of our God ! ”

His soul awakes ! No siren’s voice  
Can lure his steps astray,  
The storm and calm alike are his  
To build his upward way ;  
Till lands resound the painter’s name,  
And years crown it with deathless fame.

## A TALE OF EDINBURGH, 1647.

### A BALLAD.

BRAVE Fortha’s waves an’ whinny Braids  
Whar’ wimplin’ burnies play,  
An’ Arthur’s crouchin’ lion bauld  
Round as our guardians lay ;  
But vain their ward an’ vain man’s arm,  
Pale death as *plague* had come,  
An’ earth to half the dead withheld  
Her last sad gift—a tomb.  
An’ ’mid our dool, a dark ship cam’  
And anchored Leith afore,  
An’ twice twa hundred men she threw  
Upon the southern shore.

Dunedin saw a Moorish host  
Her maiden Fort draw nigh,  
And on the breeze a crescent flag  
Proud mocked the Christian sky.  
I trow, they had a gallant chief  
That hairt o' fair might thrall,  
An' in the flash o' his dark e'e  
There spak' a darin' saul.

Our doughty Provost, guid Sir John,\*  
A brave, stour man was he,  
Wi' his ain han' the Canon-gate  
He bolted sickerly.  
"I'll force your gates, I'll down your walls,  
Your streets make run with gore."  
"Your words, fierce fae, we dinna fear  
Syne death stan's at ilk door.

"Gress cleeds our streets, our mairts are dumb,  
Our rich hae fled wi' fear,  
Scarce four score guairds, while stricken men  
Like ghaists flit here an' there.  
But while a sword our arm can draw,  
That sword will be our shield,  
An' ower our bleedin' forms ye'll stap  
Ere our auld toun shall yield."

The Corsair paused. I trow there stole  
A tear frae his dark e'e ;  
"Then, Provost, pay a ransom fair,  
To my brave men and me,  
And I will spare your crumbling walls  
Scarce worth a warrior's breath,  
And you'll give me your first-born son,  
As hostage for your faith."

\* Sir John Smith of Groathill Grange, Craigleith.

“ My faether’s God gied me nae son,  
My child—a winsome maid—  
But daith now claims my darlin’ flower,  
The ‘ pest’ is on her laid.”

“ Thy child then place beneath my care,  
A cunning craft I hold,  
Thy maid I’ll heal and bring her back  
As lamb safe to the fold.”  
Then guid Sir John was sair distraught  
’Tween love an’ doubt an’ fear,  
“ God’s ways are dark, life may be nigh,  
I’ll trust this bold Corsair.”

O slow the weary suns gaed round,  
An’ night but tardy fled,  
The fourth morn saw a father’s arms  
Thrown round a rescued maid.  
“ O gowden gifts an’ gratefu’ tears  
Frae faether’s hairt I gie,  
You’ve dowered my hame wi’ this dear life  
To bless my wife an’ me.”

“ Here’s my reward,—yonder my ship !  
My ransom must be paid ;  
’Tis not your gold nor city fair,  
But this dear lovely maid.”  
“ O dool an’ wae wad on me fa’  
An’ heaven wad closéd be,  
Were I to wed to a fause faith  
The bairn my God gaed me.”

“ Out frae me a’ interpreters,  
I’ll speak my mither tongue,  
Proud auld Scotch bluid rins in my veins  
Frae Graemes an’ Elliots sprung.

My mither in this dear auld toun  
Taught me through Christ to pray ;  
An' 'mid dark years He's been the guide  
O' wanderin' Andrew Gray.  
In years lang fled I fause was chairged  
A vile incendiarie ;  
Men wanted bluid, and I was doomed  
To face the gallow's tree.

"My last e'en cam' ; daith roused my saul,  
A darin' scheme I laid,  
I foiled my guards, swam the Nor' Loch,  
An' my escape I made.  
By yon Lang Dykes \* I swore I'd come  
An' on your guilty throngs,  
My ain right arm, in blood an' flame,  
Wad wipe out a' my wrongs.  
I'm back ; As Joseph did of old,  
I cast awa my strife ;  
But hear my prayer, O gi'e to me  
That dear maid for my wife."

"O, faether, hear ! I've felt daith's chill,"  
The lady pleadin' cried,  
"That gallant knight has stolen my hairt,  
An' I maun be his bride."  
Twelve settin' suns 'mid joy an' sang  
Were seen a wedded pair,  
The bride—the flower o' Groathill Grange,  
The groom—the bold Corsair.

### THE SHIP'S SONG.

AWAY I bound o'er the deep blue sea,  
With my outspread wings on high,  
And catch the breeze as it skims along  
With its shout, or wail, or sigh.

\* Princes Street now occupies their site.

I bring the fruits of the golden east,  
And I baffle sunless skies,  
Then bear the toils of the brawny west,  
To the lands where palm trees rise.

I bridge all seas and I link strange lands,  
And carpet the angry main,  
Mid-way I stand with my outstretched hand,  
And in love wed them again,  
And teach their sons the all-glorious song  
Of the nations' brotherhood,  
To live in peace as the Father wills,  
And their own's their neighbour's good.

Then rose a voice from the dark blue sea,  
With its accents deep and slow,  
Like th' old church bell when another soul  
Bids adieu this world of woe ;  
"Hush, hush ! Your might ! What is it, vain child ?  
But the sport of waves at play ;  
One angry sweep of my giant arm  
Wipes thee out from th' light of day."

A song came then floating o'er the deep,  
And the years have blest th' reply ;  
"Yet greater's he seeking all to bless,  
Than the mighty to destroy."

### A SUNNY MORNING AT PEEBLES.

SEE o'er Venlaw is streaming  
The banners of the day,  
And thousand hills are gleaming  
'Neath summer's golden ray ;  
The flowers from sleep are waking,  
Kissed by the morning light,

And woods to songs are breaking,  
And all to joy incite,  
And listening Tweed, roused by their lays,  
Lends his proud voice to swell the praise.

Sing then no dirge of sorrow  
When sunshine floods the morn ;  
Why dream of clouds to-morrow,  
Or trials yet unborn ?  
Look for the gems that glitter  
O'er fell and crag and lea,  
And sun-glents as they flicker  
Upon the mantling sea ;  
Rouse, doubting hearts, earth's voices hear,  
All, all proclaim a Father near !

Our children shame us, craven,  
They trust for "daily bread,"  
They make our hearts their haven,  
Can we not trust our Head ?  
Ay, fathers, hear earth's story,  
You, mothers, 'mid love's throng,  
Youths, maidens, learn her glory,  
And fill your lives with song !  
Strike, strike the harp of gratitude,  
For mercies gird thee as a flood.

Throw off all lordly aiming,  
Root out the curse of caste,  
Dear brother-love proclaiming,  
And all oppression past.  
Your souls were nobler chartered  
Than counting *gold* the man,  
Have you that birth-right bartered,  
And wrecked heaven's glorious plan ?  
Thy day's not done—up, up and live,  
And win for life a sunny eve !



O nature's wise forgetting  
Of all her winters fled,  
Shames all our guilty frettings  
O'er trials dying, dead.  
Give free your hearts' oblation,  
Find love her best employ,  
And shout with glad creation,  
One welling burst of joy,  
Till echoes from yon further shore,  
Shall whisper *Rest* when life is o'er !

## TO ROTHESAY.

DEAR Rothesay, as to lover's arms  
I longing come once more,  
To nestle 'mid the countless charms  
That haunt thy wavy shore.  
Haven of rest ! I seek thy glades,  
As wounded deer the friendly shades.

Escaped from city grime and toil,  
And east winds breathing death,  
I'd bask beneath thy sunny smile  
And life-restoring breath ;  
I loved thee in life's opening day,  
And dearer, now, when locks are grey.

Thy guardian mountains circling round,  
As nature's altars rise,  
And fleecy clouds through space profound,  
As incense seek the skies ;  
While wind and wave with joyous voice  
Strike their proud lyre and cry, " Rejoice ! "

I touch thy soul, and thoughts sublime  
Rise like the dreams of youth,  
Or breathings from some fairer clime,  
The home of love and truth ;

As if my God through thee found tongue  
In nobler strains than poets' song.

'Mid clasp of hand from dear "auld frien's,"  
Toiling to bless the race,  
Joy pulses through my lagging veins  
To take the helper's place ;  
Not caring what the task may be,  
If fettered brother be made free.

Then let me share thy healing stores,  
And beauties richly given,  
And hear the preachers of thy shores,  
Sing their proud song of heaven,  
And share my gifts with brother man,  
And play my part in time's high plan.

### TO THE MEMORY OF DEAR MAGGIE C.

SWEET eve and sleep stole softly round,  
And lulled the world to rest ;  
With mother-care they hushed each sound,  
While toil its pillow pressed.  
Like captive in his chains, I mused  
On days for ever fled,  
For memory still with tears refused  
To bid the past be dead.

Old days returned and she was there  
Who sunned my morning sky,  
Unchanged, yet changed to form more fair,  
To purer light her eye.  
All heaven was mine ! A boundless bliss  
Flashed open to my sight,  
I sprang her loving form to press,  
But clasped the empty night,

And woke from out that mocking sleep  
In that dark evening's gloom,  
To know the stars in silence deep  
Watched round my darling's tomb.

### LOVE'S FUTURE.

I've seen a struggling flower  
In cold, bleak spring,  
Dare its high best, 'mid storm and shower,  
To life to cling ;  
Then kindly suns would bless,  
And soft winds blow,  
Till it proclaimed, in rainbow dress,  
Its right to grow.

So here, love dares, though snows  
Fall on its roots,  
And envious frosts, without repose,  
Nip all its shoots ;  
But when its summer's won,  
Unseen though nigh,  
'Twill find, in its new life begun,  
No clouded sky !

### GROWTH.

LITTLE by little we know and grow,  
And pile up the realms of mind,  
As streams run on with increasing flow,  
Till their parent sea they find.  
Higher and higher our thoughts still climb,  
My past ideals are dead,  
For as I scale the bright steepes of time,  
Still fairer proud tower o'erhead.

The perfect's unknown, but here and there  
The clouds will break o'er my sky,

And gleams of a nobler life I share,  
Foretelling that day is nigh.  
The rift above is an angel bright,  
Its sheen I must make my own,  
A cloud may close that window of light,  
And the golden gleam be gone.

Each day my mail shows some ugly scar,  
My weapons untempered found,  
Yet 'mid the smoke of the pelting war,  
I feel I am gaining ground.  
Each unfought foe claims a newer foil  
To parry his fatal brand,  
Then foot to foot till his blows recoil,  
And faint grow his heart and hand.

Mine then, to seize this all-growing power  
As the drowning man a buoy,  
And find my soul at each evening hour  
With its victor song of joy.

## THEY WEPT.

*Grasp's* life was past ; his wealth unblest,  
Though bought with heart and brain and care,  
The world swept on in wild unrest  
In schemes and gains he could not share ;  
His throbbing brow his pillow pressed,  
While memories cried from out the deep  
O'er Godless gains. He could but weep,  
Amid the dark accusing years,  
Vain mocking tears !

*Sloth* breathless watched the setting sun,  
As night and death blent shadows cast,  
With empty hand and task undone,  
He shuddered 'neath the accusing blast ;

No trophies from time's battle won,  
Life's splendid glory thrown away  
Its awful worth now learned at last,  
When night bent o'er expiring day ;  
Too late, too late ! his hour had fled,  
With bursting heart he groaning shed,  
O'er all his empty, useless years,  
Sad, hopeless tears !

*Hate* cursed a man of noble soul,  
Forgot his worth 'neath hell's dark night,  
While envy burned like living coal,  
And draped all in its lurid light.  
With serpent guile he near him stole,  
Crouching, he braced his gathering might,  
Sprang on his prey—his hapless goal ;  
And while his heart was fired of hell,  
His victim sank, pierced in the fight ;  
From glaring eyes then wildly fell,  
'Mid memories of his plotting years,  
Satanic tears !

*Love* stood alone. Around the dead  
Lay waiting in their dreamless sleep ;  
They all were hers by ties still wed,  
For time too strong, for death too deep.  
From crystal gates bright spirits sped,  
And round her unseen glory shed ;  
She wept, 'mid blessings from that band,  
And visions of yon deathless land,  
When past's the toil of weary years,  
Soft, hopeful tears !

The young, the rescued stood around,  
And blest the *Guide* that made them strong  
To front their foes and win their ground,  
To dare be true 'mid scorn and wrong,

Know pardon's might and hope's proud song.  
Dear were their words unto his soul,  
And down his cheek began to roll,  
Amid these sheaves of toiling years,  
Glad, heavenly tears !

*Faithful* his life 'mid outcasts spent,  
Their hate and scoffs he patient bore,  
Yet trusting still, on mercy bent,  
To eve his noble life he wore,  
Till missed from out his high intent,  
These scorners sought his humble door,  
And claimed his prayers ; their hearts were rent,  
No idle cry ! They were not dead !  
"Thank God," he breathed and softly shed,  
Forgetting all his painful years,  
Pure, Godlike tears !

#### AN INCIDENT IN A SCOTCH MINE.

Av, stranger, I have travelled,  
Tracked all the U.S.A.,  
I guess when all is totted,  
This beats it far away.  
Seen Death ? Wal', that's dull askin',  
We've death-hunks in our line ;  
You bet, we've all our story,  
Now, listen, here is mine.

See yonder cot 'mid hazels,  
A-sleepin' in the flat ?  
Snug, sir ? There lives my pardner,  
An' we calls 'im "gentle Mat."  
Mat B——'s a name to swear by,  
The barns all love 'im, too ;  
They're 'cute, an' judge right off, sir,  
Them little chaps, they do.

Wal', Mat an' me was workin',  
A-pickin' at our spell,  
When he sang out "D'ye hear, Tom,  
There goes the 'danger bell!'"  
Down picks, our hearts wild leapin',  
An' off we at the run,  
To larn what death was waitin'  
To wipe us from the sun.  
Ay, big! life felt that moment,  
My wife, my kids, my sire;  
'Tween us an' them stood glarin'  
Death with red shafts o' fire!

The flames had seized the rope, sir,  
None left but Mat an' me;  
It might bear one, but two, sir,  
No, no! that could not be.  
An' o'er five yards o' shaftin'  
The flames barred up the way,  
An' through that belt o' death, sir,  
Our road to dear life lay.

I am no coward, stranger,  
In risks I've ta'en my place,  
But that red path o' death? No,  
I could not, dared not face.  
Mat's strong arm then swung round me,  
"Into the cage, my brother,  
Our friends above are prayin',  
We'll live or die together!"

How long that uphaul seemed, sir,  
Till we reached day again.  
'Mid sobbin' wives an' broken prayers,  
An' tears o' bearded men.  
My wife—that's her a-washin'—  
A son bore after that,

I kinder thought it right, sir,  
To call 'im after Mat ;  
That's 'im a-crowin' on the knee  
Of the brave man who rescued me !

## THE LITTLE MAIDEN'S DREAM.

O MOTHER ! What a fairy sight  
Came floating in my dreams last night,  
That land where angels tread ;  
Your little May must tell it all,  
Before she takes her ropes and ball,  
And it slip from her head.

I dreamt I saw a little maid,  
In rosy morn sport in our glade  
Where winks the flickering light.  
Her glad shouts filled the joyous air  
That played "bo-peep" among her hair,  
Then off, in merry flight.  
She chased the dancing butterflies—  
The fairy blossoms of the skies—  
All summer in her look ;  
And chatting to the listening trees,  
And flinging laughter to the breeze,  
Ran races with the brook.  
The king-cup and the sweet bluebell,  
The woodbine and the pimpernel,  
With lilies bright and fair,  
She pulled and in her merry glee,  
She brought the dew-sprent flowers to me,  
And wove them in my hair.


And then, enrapt, I seemed to stand  
'Mid floods of song in elfin land,  
Earth's rainy days were gone,  
And golden thrones towered in the west,  
And trees were in bright garments dressed,  
Dropped from the setting sun ;



And there beneath an old oak tree  
Whose quivering leaves low sang to me,  
"You are the village pride,"  
I saw a lady young and fair,  
With blushing cheek stand smiling there,  
A young man by her side.  
Then marriage bells! I saw the bride  
Steal gently from the young man's side,  
I think I see her now.  
"These flowers are thine," she smiling said,  
And took the wreath from off her head,  
And wound it round my brow.

Swift fairy hands a cot now piled  
Beside a brook with foam-flakes wild,  
Won from three moorland scaurs;  
Sun-wave and shade raced o'er the ground,  
With flowers and daisies scattered round  
Like bits of broken stars!  
If heaven is love, then heaven was there,  
My heart leaped out their joy to share,  
And call that spot my home;  
'Twas like when dear papa was here,  
Who was so good—O, dry that tear!  
He's waiting till we come!

Swift as a thought escapes in flight,  
All vanished in a sudden night,  
Cold, black, unmooned, unstarred,  
And when a sunless day returned,  
My throbbing heart with anguish burned,  
I saw a lone churchyard!  
There 'mid the waiting sleepers round,  
A widow sought a grassy mound,  
Drawn by love's bleeding crave,  
Two girls were there all reft of joy,  
Who wept and watched a little boy  
Pluck daisies from the grave!



My world grew old, for years had fled,  
My heart lay buried with the dead,  
    My sun was wrapped in gloom,  
And far away was every thing  
That could life cheer or pleasure bring,  
    And nought near but the tomb !

Can soul touch soul when near the dead ?  
Or ear catch thought when hearts are wed ?  
    Well, this,—a voiceless prayer  
I heard ! From her closed lips it rose  
For little me to Him who knows,—  
    “ O strengthen her to bear.”

What mean they all ? They're very near,  
And seem all me ! Each joy, each tear,  
    I feel them one . . . by . . . one ;  
“ My child, O ever breathe this prayer,  
Through life's strange day, 'mid joy or care,  
    ‘ Thy will, O Lord, be done ! ’ ”

### OUR BORDERLAND.

HAIL Borderland ! our hearts' dear home !  
    Where dawned life's opening day ;  
Thy memories, strewn with golden dreams,  
    Hoard summers far away,  
Till in our life they live and move,  
And quickening springs of action prove.

Song haunts thy scenes ; thy fairy dells  
    Wait but the painter's hand ;  
Thy speech a universal tongue  
    The heart can understand ;  
E'en 'mid thy floods and pelting storms,  
When thy fierce sons awake to arms,  
Some hand unseen sublimes their strife,  
As death wakes man to nobler life !

Thy frowning keeps, grey with the eld  
Of time's corroding rust,  
Have tales of war and plighted troth  
Wrapped in their crumbling dust ;  
And as their halls we, silent, tread,  
We touch the past, live with the dead,  
Till, awed, with beating hearts we hear  
Their ghostly shadows flitting near.

Thy warrior-dead ride on thy winds,  
And glory in thy storms,  
Their voices thundering as of old,  
"The foe, the foe ! to arms !"   
And 'mid thy gales they fight once more,  
Their clansmen's feuds just as of yore ;  
Or on wild moor lone watch they keep  
O'er some red field where heroes sleep.

Land of true hearts and patriot fire !  
Thy vales have each a tongue,  
And freedom's voice haunts every glen  
That runs thy hills among ;  
While brooklets chime thy olden lays  
As soft they kiss thy sunny braes—  
Glad songs to cheer life's sinking years,  
Or lays of hope to dry our tears.

Thy minstrels revel in thy charms  
Till woods and wilds are glad,  
And gleesome on the joyous breeze  
They broadcast incense shed,  
While herald larks on quivering wing,  
At morn's glad throne their anthems sing.

Sweet Ettrick chants her "Shepherd's" lays,  
The Leader rolling red  
Repeats the martyr's dying song,  
And guards his narrow bed ;

While Powsail sings bard Merlin's fame,\*  
And in her vale enweaves his name.

Fair Teviot haloes Pringle's name.  
Leithen her "Laddie" † sings,  
And Slitrig with his lordly voice,  
His Leyden forward brings :  
Proud Tweed, triumphant, fills the air  
With Scott's immortal name,  
And craig and fell wake countless tongues  
To swell the loud acclaim,  
Shout, Borderland, he is thy son !  
Thine are the glories he has won,  
And exiles far from Scotland dear,  
Shed o'er his lays the patriot's tear.

Then Border men, be brave, be true,  
Yours is a heritage  
Of peerless glory ;—through the years  
Write ye a rousing page,  
Above earth's dross make goodness rise  
And with strong wing seek fairer skies.

ANSWER TO AN INVITATION (*in verse*)  
TO TEA, FROM MR WILLIAM  
GAVIN, HOPETOUN GARDENS.

I PRIZE your *lines* and won't refuse  
The joy so warmly offered ;  
A tea and girls ! thrice happy news,  
I wonder how 'twas proffered.

\* After the battle of Arderlydd, fought in 573, Merlin, the Welsh bard, fled for shelter to this neighbourhood. He was hunted down, killed, and buried here about 620. The vale is called after him Merlin dale.

† William Sanderson, "Tweedside Laddie."

O gentle woman, star of earth,  
 Of home the life and light,  
 Our purest bliss from her has birth,  
 Without her all is night.  
 True words and brave her sweet lips grace,  
 Before which trouble flies,  
 Kind summer wantons in her face,  
 While heaven smiles in her eyes.

When sickness wracks the weary frame  
 Or near sounds death's dark storm,  
 Who nurses back life's flickering flame?  
 'Tis woman's angel form!  
 Or who with gentler hand can bind  
 The careworn sinking heart,  
 And calm the tortures of the mind,  
 Or soothe life's bitter smart?  
 When Adam left the sweet employ  
 Of Eden's lovely bower,  
 He grasped his Eve and felt the joy,  
 He'd kept its richest flower!

I ask not beauty in her form,  
 Nor yet an angel's face;  
 Give me a soul my heart to charm,  
 And worth's enduring grace.  
 Should she e'er weep or frown, I then  
 Would ply love's luring wiles,  
 And woo the sunshine back again,  
 And live upon her smiles.

If in an hour of social mirth  
 I've at her hard words flung,  
 E'en while the jest had luckless birth,  
 My heart belied my tongue.  
 Does man e'er turn from duty's path  
 To sin's unhallowed groves,  
 His brother-worm spurns him with wrath,  
 She weeps, forgives and loves.

If virtue, faith and nobleness  
Are measures of the mind,  
Proud man must yield the palm in this,  
And bow to womankind !  
May woman's love when life's nigh past,  
Light up that season drear,  
And on the sward that shrouds my dust,  
There pensive shed a tear.

AT THE GREY STONE, HOPETOUN,  
DURING A DARK STORMY NIGHT.

WILD the billows sweep  
O'er the raging deep,  
And in fury leap  
On the shore ;  
And the thundering chime  
Of their awful rhyme  
Rolls a song sublime  
Evermore.

Day is fled, and night  
Hides from hungering sight  
Th' tempest's mad delight  
In his war ;  
Through her pitchy walls  
The battle-roar appals,  
Heaven downward falls  
Earth to mar.

But the storm-god tires,  
And his wrath expires,  
Breathless he retires  
To his keep ;  
Then the wearied waves,  
Like exhausted slaves,  
In their shelly caves  
Fall asleep.

'Thou, O troubled sea !  
Limn'st man's destiny,  
Storm-tossed, dark like thee,  
    Starless, pained,  
Hastening as a wave  
To his waiting grave,  
Fearing none to save  
    At life's end.

Then an unseen hand  
From a better land,  
From the goring strand  
    Lifts his soul ;  
Doubt and fear now die,  
Faith with hope-lit eye  
Sees her Helper nigh—  
    Heaven man's all !

### SPRING'S HANDIWORK.

ROUSE, wintry souls, hail new-born spring,  
Shake off your fears and welcomes sing ;  
Earth greets the year's first shout of joy,  
And angels bless spring's glad employ.  
She comes with life's mysterious breath,  
To fight the darker mystery—death !  
She runs down glens, she climbs up hills,  
And flings gold-flakes on laughing rills,  
And lichens with their flashing eye,  
She pins on crags midway the sky,  
And bell-shaped flowers with gleesome mirth,  
Ring merry peals to waking earth,  
A thousand songs hail her return.  
And tell of joys to those who mourn.

Hope spreads her wings and fear takes flight,  
And earth forgets her wintry night,  
Old scenes grow young and in their mirth  
Twine flowery wreaths for mother earth.

Her brow their hands with lilies grace,  
With roses tinge her brunette face.  
The daisy opes her starry eyes  
And hails her sisters in the skies.  
The lowly primrose decks the shade,  
And scents the breeze that haunts the glade.  
The western winds, like youth's glad voice,  
Exultant shout, "rejoice, rejoice!"  
And in their merry, mad-cap moods,  
Play hide and seek among the woods,  
And May, rejoicing in the play,  
Shakes showers of blossoms on their way.  
The sombre pines with feathery arms,  
Tinge all their tips with greener charms,  
While suns arouse with calls of love,  
The slumbering music of the grove;  
And on the verge of new-born day,  
The seraph-lark wells out its lay,  
Earth's *now* is one long day of bliss,  
Nor seeks she care to make it less.

See manly toil its temple rears,  
And heaven, well pleased, its service hears  
And gives this voice:—"The earth is Mine,  
But man, my son, I make it thine!"  
Thus earth and sky with quickening voice  
Bid soul and sense and love rejoice,  
And my dull heart must learn their song,  
And join its lisplings to the throng.

### THE PATRIOT'S PRAYER.

O THOU, supreme, 'neath whose pure gaze  
All time is *now*, give ear  
And teach me, groping 'mid earth's maze,  
To feel Thy presence near.  
Thine is our life, and nations are  
But larger life; Thy hand



All change controls ; O let love's star  
Shine o'er my native land !  
Thou hast her blest in ages past,  
Her wall of fire be to the last.

Dark is her day ! For faith—unrest !  
Her noblest sons are dumb ;  
And struggling souls cry, fiercely pressed,  
“O when will morning come ?”  
Adrift, crowds toss in untracked seas,  
Unruddered, cross-wind stressed,  
And deem they're fanned by freedom's breeze,  
Yet feel themselves unblest ;  
Till reckless 'mid the swallowing wave,  
With scoff or knit-teeth front the grave.

The truths that flamed our patriot sires  
Are sneering thrown aside ;  
And flippant tongues cry out, “*effete* !”  
From worse than learned pride.  
And daughters, wives with free-love pen  
Disgrace their womanhood ;  
And He who broke their chains, they deem  
With narrow views embued !  
Lord, as of old, say, “Peace, be still,”  
Bid light from darkness rise,  
And show all truths in Thee have birth,  
And ever harmonise,  
Though priest and sage in endless round,  
Divorce what Thou hast firmly bound.

With brother-love we crowd our prayers—  
The mocking *all* we give—  
Earth's *great forgotten* claim no care,  
Nor ask we how they live.  
O'er fiction's dreams we heave our sighs,  
And with their puppets live ;  
Their pangs we share with weeping eyes,  
And o'er their sorrows grieve,

While men around in wild despair,  
Spend their fierce cry on desert air.

Break class distrusts. Our blood-linked bond  
Proclaims our brotherhood,  
Let wealth and toil united stand,  
Co-workers for one good.  
Scourge from Thy house the mammon band,  
Proud strangers to Thy will,  
Men, who for ease and sordid gain,  
Dishonoured pulpits fill ;  
Whose lifeless words like snowflakes fall,  
And bury o'er the wandering soul.

A know-naugh creed—a something new—  
Play jest with sacred themes,  
And Calvary, yon empty grave,  
Are mocked as idle dreams.  
Each trading mart's a blotted page,  
The simple sink its prey,  
Where savings gleaned for hoary age,  
Foul vultures sweep away.  
Life's nobler self raise from its grave,  
As flowers in spring are born ;  
Entombed, let sect-hate sink to have  
No resurrection morn ;  
Nor idol mount the heart's high throne,  
Where Thou must reign supreme, alone !

Our virtuous poor and guilty wealth  
Rub shoulders on our streets ;  
Here rough-hand crime, there figure-craft  
Dupe with false Balance Sheets.  
Justice ! good sooth ! It staggering trips,  
A wild caprice it sways,  
The thief of thousands, scarce it whips,  
The thief of bread it brays ;


Sentence and crime no law connects,  
But judgments fall as whim directs.

With tongues of fire earth sternly craves  
Thy justice forth to stand !  
And points, 'mid griefs and groans and graves,  
To blood upon our hand.  
Give strength to bury self each hour,  
Faith in Thy Perfect Son,  
Thy law our guide, and love the power  
To live "Thy will be done !"  
Our sins forgive. Our public wrongs  
Send wisdom to remove,  
And may our lives be active songs  
Of mercy, goodness, love ;  
Then rightly shall we gird Thy throne,  
And worship Thee, supreme, alone !

### THE BROOK.

ON flows the prattling brook,  
Clad in morn's golden beams,  
Like sunny tale of girlhood years,  
And mother's holy dreams.  
It broadening winds through glades,  
Sings young life glad and free,  
And trills heaven's melody of truth—  
A guileless maiden's glee.

It loitering listens, thrilled,  
To wooing larks above,  
Then sings of hope and holy trust,  
A maiden's young heart-love.  
But clouds unsheer its smile,  
Dark waters taint its wave,  
And hearts that loved and dreamt of faith,  
Reap shame, despair, a grave.



## THE MOTTOES.

SWEET night had loving gathered earth 'neath her  
brooding wing,  
And starry worlds—heaven's street lamps—in space  
hung flickering,  
While clouds as evening incense, or earth's unspoken  
prayer,  
Ploughed with a noiseless motion the shoreless sea  
of air ;

And through the jewelled glory  
The queen of heaven moved,  
As if the sun she followed,  
Her husband whom she loved,  
And all her starry maidens—  
Fair children of the night—  
Had come in love to tend her  
Each with her tiny light ;  
Or like some fair young widow,  
Pale, sad, heart-pierced, alone,  
Whose better half had perished,  
And with him all had gone ;  
Still on with silent purpose  
She passed her sister spheres,  
Like beauty clothed in sorrow  
Too deep for words or tears.

Earth's labour roar was silent, for toil sweet rest had  
won,

And in glad hearts and homesteads shone bright  
love's blissful sun,  
Here mirth and song, there story from eld's life-  
stirring scroll,  
Awoke high dreams of daring in some young giant soul,  
Who heard the roar of battle,  
Who chid the lagging years,  
When he would win his glory,  
Among earth's noble peers.

Hark ! from yon valley curtained in evening's golden  
beams,  
There rolls a voice that wakens our soul from idle  
dreams ;  
For on each other leaning life's path we tramp along,  
His strength may nerve our weakness, then list unto  
his song.

FIRST VOICE (*Male*).

" I'll sing of *Hope* for ever ! Her voice with sinless  
wile  
Thrills till in wild emotion I at my trials smile !  
Is not the sun's proud mission to weave night into  
day,  
To wake the might of nations its giant game to play,  
Earth knows his call and answers,  
Rejoicing in the sight,  
Till flowers spring in their gladness  
And kiss the morning light ;  
So hope—heaven's first-born daughter—  
Smiles on our starless road,  
And darkness flees her presence,  
As fear, the smile of God.  
The babe knows not who tends it until the mother's  
love  
Awakes responsive echoes like music from above,  
So ere I knew her presence she blest my morning  
hours,  
With tender care she fostered and braced my growing  
powers ;  
Though friends 'mid storms forsook me, as base from  
battle hide,  
She laughed away my doubtings and marched on by  
my side.  
With gold her nimble fingers  
Fringed every threatening cloud,  
And 'bove the roar of tempests  
Her clear song rang aloud.

When high resolve grew craven  
And faith played—vagabond,  
She rent the pitchy curtain  
And showed bright skies beyond.  
And now from scattered fragments of plans that  
round me lie,  
She builds a glorious rainbow that spans my future sky.  
With this then for my motto, I sail o'er life's rough sea,  
Hope, *hope* shall be my watchword, the only song for  
me !”

SECOND VOICE (*Male*).

“And mine, *One Purpose*, brothers ; time hath not  
room for more,  
And firm resolve—my life-blood—shall through each  
muscle pour ;  
As trees but bear one fruitage, clouds but one treasure  
give,  
So I shall grasp some duty and in its being live.  
We waste our lives in dreaming, the aims that charm  
to-day,  
We, as a broken vessel, to-morrow throw away.  
Our little life I reckon a wave on th' sea of time,  
But long enough ere breaking to make that life  
sublime !  
Somewhere my God stands waiting,  
By axe and plough and wain,  
To bid some hoary forest  
Step back for waving grain.  
His sun and shower—my helpmates—  
Will, in the glad employ  
Clothe wastes in flowery garments,  
Till deserts shout with joy.  
One aim has all things conquered and made fate bow  
her knee,  
On seas no storms I'll reckon, on land no Alps shall be !  
Then mine's the flag of Purpose while sailing o'er  
life's sea,

*One Aim* shall be my watchword, the only song for me !”

THIRD VOICE (*Male*).

“Hear, mates, my flag is *Forward* ! I'll nail that to my mast,  
And through my unknown morrows I'll hold on to the last.

Time writes through all the ages proud trophies of my theme,

Each *chaos* cradles *cosmos*, and facts are not a dream.

And still it holds rich treasures

To fill the first brave hand,

And richer make earth's trophies,

And crown our fatherland.

We'll plant the tree of Knowledge on every sounding strand,

Till all become our allies and join our marching band.

Our failures we shall reckon a bitter kind of gain,  
Through other paths we'll venture while smarting  
'neath the pain ;

Some touch will force the secret,

While through earth's mazes dark

We hoist progression's banner,

And carve our arrow-mark ;

And from earth's stony records

We'll learn life's growing rhyme,

See, *Forward* ! stride the ages

That span the gulf of time ;

With reverence still advancing where human thought  
ne'er trod,

We'll hear the rustling garments that speak a present  
God.

As when a minstrel's playing, some clear note of  
his strain

Will wake some silent harp-string to answer back  
again,

So in each human bosom though crushed by guilt's  
fell load,  
To heaven's dear eye of pity, there lurks some breath  
of God ;

And we shall pour the music  
Which human hearts call *love*,  
Fired with the strain we've borrowed  
From angels' songs above,  
Till dormant souls shall listen,  
And feel the long-lost bond  
Thrill all their breasts with longings,  
Till heart to heart respond.

As rising suns, free-handed, shower glory in their  
might,  
Till earth from out the darkness steps forth in peer-  
less light,  
So o'er those erring natures and sinks of nameless woe  
We'll bid the stream of duty with tender love to flow ;  
Till o'er our world redeemed back to her Maker's  
plan,  
The voice of earth will thunder the brotherhood of  
man !  
Then *Forward* is my watchword to glories yet to be,  
The earth's long-promised harvest, the only song for  
me !”


FOURTH VOICE (*Male*).

“My trumpet-call is *Courage*. - I feel its mighty  
charm,  
And catch its *fear-not* music my nobler man to arm.  
If storms should wreck my labour and want its worst  
prepare,  
I'll show earth's not my treasure nor yet its joys my  
care.

'Tis easy 'mid the sunshine,  
When sleeps the fickle breeze,  
And calm repose is pillowed  
On all the glassy seas,



To pull the trim-built wherry  
Swift through the slumbering tide,  
And feel as if true courage  
Sat pulling by our side ;  
But let the tempest waken, the sea gird on his might,  
And clouds and rain and darkness close round in  
pitchy night,  
Then he's the dauntless oarsman who through the  
drifting spray,  
Hears but the voice of duty amid death's stern array,  
Who hears the roar of waters,  
Who feels the spray of death,  
Yet knows 'tis his to struggle  
Until his latest breath ;  
And when with keel to heaven  
His boat drifts on the wave,  
Telling that in "the hollow  
Of God's hand" is his grave,  
Though no soul-stirring song-gods may sound his tale  
sublime  
To thrill the heart of nations that tramp the path of time,  
We feel his Christlike courage ; his path of duty trod  
Kept his high soul in harness and glorified his God !  
Or he who 'mid earth's hell-hounds,  
From faith's straight path undriven,  
In front—a nearing scaffold,  
Yet calmly dares for heaven ;  
He 'mid his fierce assailants,  
While round all broken lie  
The treasures of his homestead  
Counts kindred with the sky.  
Thus would I fight life's battle,  
Fearing one fear alone,  
Lest to myself a coward  
Man's name I should uncrown.  
When summer robed in glory gives flowers a prophet's  
voice,  
And forests wave their banners and hoary hills rejoice,



And we in sunshine basking may fail our sterner part,  
And let the joyous present intoxicate the heart ;

’Tis ours then to remember

’Mid summer’s songs and charms,

That all her sunny glory

Holds winter in her arms.

Then through my unknown future this call my strength  
shall be,

Yes, *Courage* is my watchword, the only song for  
me ! ”

FIFTH VOICE (*Female*).

“ High souled and brave, my brothers, proud joy a  
sister’s place,

For none will e’er his watchword forget, disown,  
disgrace ;

But mine is lowly *Patience*, this makes defeat sublime,  
Though wrecks of kingly purpose strew all the shores  
of time.

Though spring with new life chartered,

Winds wild with sunny glee,

Bid brooklets, clad in gold flakes,

Run singing to the sea ;

Yet storms may wake, and thunder

In riot rend the air,

And floods of roaring waters

Write ruin everywhere ;

And homeward swains retreating hear demons voice  
the storm,

As smitten nature shrieking quails in her wild alarm ;

Appalled, they cower as havoc the storm-god’s voice  
obeys,

While on their awe-blanchèd features their trembling  
children gaze ;

So in life’s sunny morning

*Hope* binds all ’neath her sway,

And *Purpose*, self-reliant,

Scorns doubt and fear away ;

*Forward* sublimes youth's spirit,  
 And *Courage* fires his eye,  
 And gives him all hereafter,  
 And fame that scorns to die ;  
 But ere noon flaunts its glory his sunlit vision's fled,  
 And on his heart's cold altar his manhood's aim is  
 dead ;  
 And he, unskilled, impatient, life's sterner task to  
 bear,  
 Will in his coward madness enclasp a dumb despair ;  
 Or else, in darker moments,  
 With ground-teeth 'gainst the rod,  
 Will question the Eternal  
 And doubt his father's God ;  
 Forgetting in his daring strange pathways cleave the  
 skies,  
 And through some bitter 'need be' the path to  
 glory lies.  
 My sun may roll through tempests,  
 My day sister the night,  
 When comes the blessed morning,  
 Then, *then* there will be light.  
 Choose then thy manly watchwords, work out thine  
 own decree,  
 But Patience and Submission the only song for me ! "

Then ceased the silvery music,  
 But gladness floated round,  
 As if some loving angel  
 Had made it holy ground,  
 Had flung to-morrow open  
 Our daring to inspire,  
 And into thought and action  
 Had poured celestial fire ;  
 And at our lagging footsteps  
 Had laid God's burden down  
 And asked, " Your choice,—an outcast,  
 Or wearer of a crown ? "

WRITTEN ON BACK OF A TWENTY POUND NOTE 185

Yes, God has his own workers, each in his little  
sphere,  
Their steps the tread of angels, they, sunshine every-  
where,  
Bearing their lot sublimely, and daring in the fight,  
Till earth has no to-morrow for them "to rise and  
smite."  
Then ours each day to measure our living through  
each act,  
And take each noble watchword and mould it into fact,  
Uphold this five-starred banner till eve shall close our  
race,  
And leave it bravely waving a day's march into space!

WRITTEN ON THE BACK OF A  
TWENTY POUND NOTE.

YE cam' wi' lustie joyous cheer,  
Ye baffled care an' banished fear,  
An' made me start a braw new-year,  
An' noo we pairt,  
My thanks ye hae,—aiblins a tear,  
Frae my auld hairt.

Speed on to bless some ither bield,  
A friend in need, a sword an' shield,  
An' lend it wut your micht to wield  
In life's dour fecht,  
Then your gran' worth will stan' revealed,  
To aid the richt.

FROM MY JOURNAL, MARCH —, 18—

"Man's inhumanity to man  
Makes countless thousands mourn."—BURNS.

On yon sea-walk darkly brooding,  
Paced a lone one sad and slow,  
Watching day fade into darkness,  
As the sun was sinking low,

Feeling as night round him stole,  
Something kindred to his soul.

Strange where nature, free-hand, lavished  
Thoughts of love in glories round,  
That through man a fellow-pilgrim  
Should with aching breast be found !  
While his soul though in the dust,  
Proudly felt his cause was just.

Scorning he refused the burden  
Coward hate had on him laid,  
Asking in his night of anguish,  
Why such base return was made ?  
If to duty he'd been true,  
Why should wrath *that act* pursue ?

Then a voice of silvery sweetness  
To the listening echoes flung  
Words of hope and trust in darkness,  
Strong and clear and thus it sung,  
While he listening there forgot  
Th' piercing iron of his lot.

" Child of sorrow, why this halting ?  
What dark spectre makes thee start ?  
Does thy God but rule the sunshine,  
Leaving night without a chart,  
That thy soul in wild alarm,  
Shrieks like sea-bird 'mid the storm ?

Wounded through thy love to duty—  
Sun of every noble life—  
Or like vessel tempest-stranded,  
Breaking 'neath the billows' strife.  
Know this, brother, earth's not heaven,  
Nor its praise life's grandest goal ;

Hate can thrust no deadly weapon  
Through the armour of the soul !  
True to self and true to God,  
On, brave soldier, dare thy road.

Nobler be than he who wrongs thee,  
Fearless act, thy cause is just,  
For avenger claim thy Father,  
He but waits,—wait thou and trust.  
Sheaves are still for thy old cunning,  
Here, even here, thy task's not done,  
Right will sway, though for a moment  
Passing clouds drift o'er thy sun ;  
And those shadows of the night,  
Morning's dawn will put to flight.


Thou hast known thy God in sunshine,  
And high tasks thy joy expressed,  
If in light alone thou know'st Him,  
Then art thou but poorly blest,  
For His heart's best love appears,  
When He wipes away our tears."

Then it ceased. The silence listened  
To the echoes whispering low,  
While the pale stars gazed from heaven,  
Sad and silent at earth's woe.  
Then that lone one, upward gazing,  
Woke to trust as one who dreamed,  
All was changed now and a calmness  
O'er his pensive features beamed ;  
While his firm tread seemed to say  
"Strength is mine ! I walk in day !"

A LETTER, ANSWERING A REQUEST  
TO TAKE PART IN A SOIREE (Y.M.C.A.)  
AT WARK, NORTHUMBERLAND.

YES is my "say" to your request,  
I'll come an' strive my very best  
To aid your social night ;  
To gie some helpfu' words to youth,  
O' freedom, manliness an' truth,  
To cheer them in life's fight ;  
We dinna ken what mighty bands  
Around hold powerfu' sway ;  
We touch, are touched by unseen hands,  
An' there a part we play ;  
An' deepenin' grows the calls o' time,  
We canna break our ties ;  
We either downward drag to slime,  
Or aid a brother's rise.  
Your choice now then voice now,  
Let not a moment die ;  
Be doing, pursuing  
What links you to the sky.

'Tis spring, and 'mid her sunny hours,  
The earth pins on a thousand flowers,  
An' forests find a voice  
As new life, wi' a rush o' love,  
Looks to the wootin' sky above,  
An' bids a' hairts rejoice.  
An' mine, though weak wi' burdened years,  
Feels life return—forgets its fears,  
An' braces up again ;  
And in the bliss that's floatin' round,  
My hoary age new joys has found,  
That nerves my tremblin' pen ;



Till a' the thoughts that through me thrang,  
Come wellin' up in bits o' sang,  
    Fanned by the gleesome air ;  
For nature an' her silent ways  
Hae been my charm through a' my days—  
    My teachers everywhere—

Her thunders thrill my listenin' soul,  
I glory in the ocean's roll ;  
    And in the tempest's wrath  
I dream of one dark battle-strife—  
Of soul and sin, of death and life—  
    That chokes my strugglin' breath.  
An' noo I clasp spring's outstretched hand,  
    An' learn her glad refrain ;  
As life awakes the sleepin' land,  
    An' breaks auld winter's chain ;  
        Gifts bringin' an' singin'  
        O' summers yet to be,  
        She fills me an' tells me  
        O' a' things glad an' free.

Ance mair I'll see Wark's bonnie haughs,  
Her frownin' cliffs an' siller saughs,  
    Her castle grim an' hoar,  
An' frae its wa's I'll echoes hear  
O' arms an' love an' wassail cheer,  
    That crowned the days o' yore ;  
While lordly Tweed rolls at my feet,  
    Singin' his sang o' joy,  
An' lapwings wi' their sad *peesweet*  
    That charmed me when a boy ;  
An' merry waves 'mid sunny gleams,  
    A' gold-clad flickerin' run  
In wayward glee, till fancy dreams  
    They're flirtin' wi' the sun ;



While thinkin', rhymes linkin',  
The tear noo fills my e'e,  
For near anes an' dear anes,  
Nae mair on earth I'll see.

For you the earth is young an' fair,  
An' glad sangs fill the gleesome air,  
An' hope-hued banners wave,  
Wi' prayin' hairts an' active han's,  
The future waits your brave comman's  
An' bends you willin' slave.  
The fickle hour your task may change,  
Your trials find a shorter range  
To take a deadlier aim ;  
Or, whiles dame Chance may gigglin' smile,  
An' bless your basket for a while,  
In life's bambouzin' game ;  
But be your fortune as it may,  
To right be ever true,  
Earth's a' o' care, though stern your day,  
Will leave some heavenly dew.  
Know this, and act, the worst is past,  
When firm resolved you try,  
The clouds will break and then at last  
Will burst a sunny sky ;  
A song then fu' strong then  
Will be your victor strain,  
An' fearless an' tearless,  
You'll dare life's task again.

ON HEARING "*I WOULD BE AN  
ANGEL*" SUNG.

LOUD you sing of angel brightness,  
Yearn to fill a seraph's throne,  
Thrilled by hosts in dazzling whiteness,  
Clad in glory all their own.

Would you gain in joyous rapture?  
 Would thy love have deeper song?  
 Gratitude thy being capture,  
 Were you of angelic throng?

Theirs a past undimmed by sorrow,  
 No sad heart or parting tear,  
 Hopes unfruited, care's deep furrow;  
 Nor a loved one's silent bier;  
 Fearing not the looming future,  
 Nor night deepening hour by hour,  
 Wounds that know no human suture,  
 Nor temptation's deadly power.

But when by yon crystal river,  
 Christ will wipe all tears away,  
 With our foes all fled for ever,  
 And our crown the victor's bay,  
 Then we'll sing our song supernal,  
 (Silent angels standing round),  
 Flowing from a fount eternal,  
 Their pure lips have never found;  
 Songs of earth's dark strifes and marrings,  
 Rescues from the toils of sin,  
 Victors in ten thousand warrings,  
 By His grace and strength within;  
 Breasting fearless death's cold water,  
 Feeling its slow upward rise,  
 Found His light the darkness scatter,  
 And His escort to the skies.

O *the joy of contrast* heightens  
 All that glads that blissful shore,  
 And heaven's glory grows and brightens  
 As we sing, "Our night is o'er!"  
 Then our harps with "Ransomed" welling—  
 Theirs no sharing in the strain—  
 But their voice with glad notes swelling  
 Will heaven shake with their "Amen!"

## THE OLD CAPTAIN TO HIS CREW.

(ON LEAVING ABERCORN PUBLIC SCHOOL.)

"ALL hands on deck?" "Ay, ay, all mustered."

"I've a yarn—just one shot more—  
As you're on the main deck clustered,  
Ere I, battered, drift ashore.  
By your guns stand firm and steady,  
God and country call on you,  
In the calm and storm, aye ready,  
Scottish sea-dogs through and through.

"See that pennon worn and tattered,  
Weathered through its fiftieth year,  
Storm and tempest have it battered,  
There's for it a falling tear!  
As you're winding out life's story,  
'Mid the gale and ocean's roar,  
Think of him now old and hoary,  
Waiting death upon the shore.

"Fill your Log with deeds of daring,  
Be true men e'en 'fore the mast,  
Served or serving, little caring,  
Both win crowns alike at last!  
Down that bunting, for another  
Now must hoist his flag on high,  
On, new Captain, on my brother,  
Be thy life one cloudless sky!"

## A BLADE OF GRASS.

ONLY a blade of grass  
Plucked from its tender root,  
The sport of storms or winter's wrath,  
Or prey of passing foot;

But o'er a maiden's grave  
It mourned in its sweet way,  
And now it hints a hallowed past  
That blest my life's young day.

Only a blade of grass  
Like all its sisters round,  
Has it in dreams that nature dreams  
My sacred treasure found?  
At eve, watched by the stars,  
Soft dew it gathered there,  
Then dropped a pearl—its little all,  
A silent gift—a tear!

Only a blade of grass  
Gleamed from a lowly bed,  
But it has found my bleeding heart,  
And scenes for ever fled!  
M—— faded from my sight  
As stone dropt in the sea,  
And thou, frail blade of withered grass,  
Art dear, yes, dear to me.  
O strange our teachers rise!  
For dull our hearts and slow,  
But from that grave where my heart lies,  
I've learned to succour woe.

### THE SEA BIRD ON THE ROCK.

On a rock 'mid the wrathful main,  
I saw a sea-bird rest,  
While the tide from his dark domain,  
The lessening crag oppressed;  
For the rock he had sworn 'neath his tread to drown,  
As a foe in his might dooms a siege-girt town;  
But the bird faced the foe with a heart all brave,  
As a ship in its strength dares the battling wave.

Then a son of the crested deep,  
 Resistless in his sway,  
 With a roar, wrapped the rocky keep  
 In a winding-sheet of spray ;  
 But the bird taking wing with a conquering cry,  
 Filled my heart with a joy as it did the sky ;  
 So a child of the light from earth's care and unrest  
 Spreads his wings and finds peace in a Father's breast.

### A CURIOUS INCIDENT.

I SAT when eve's sweet sheen was low,  
 Wincing beneath a critic's pen,  
 Helpless to meet his stinging blow,  
 For his the hour and vantage then ;  
 One luckless verse guileless of fire,  
 Had laid me prostrate at his feet ;  
 I'd failed to charm my lowly lyre,  
 To finer phrase and note more sweet ;  
 O "nodding" bard, learn critics claim  
 The knotted whip—the tongue of flame !

The Post,—a letter,—name unknown,  
 From proud Australia's sunny land,  
 It thanked me for the seed I'd sown,  
 The aids imparted to his hand ;  
*That . . . very . . . song*—the critic's scorn,  
 Had helped this brother in his fight,  
 Had in his darkness whispered, "Morn !"  
 Till hope was his and growing light,  
 And earth was fairer from my lay,  
 And faith had turned his night to day.

Not mine the poet's magic skill  
 To turn the clay to burnished gold,  
 To bid creations wait my will,  
 And dream of tales by angels told ;

But if some struggling mate I cheer,  
    Footing his path, steep, rough or long,  
I'll deem him—rising 'bove his fear—  
    The noblest critic of my song !  
That closing eve forgot its gloom,  
    My heart beat loud its note of joy,  
Though song-gods reign, there still is room  
    For lowly bards to find employ ;  
Is not the poet's noblest place  
To aid his God and help the race ?

## THE CAGED LARK.

MORN from the east was climbing  
    The golden slopes of day,  
And larks their herald music  
    Were flinging round its way ;  
And by a cottage window  
    A cage with lark was hung ;  
Its floor, a sod with daisies,  
    Some sister flowers among.

With upturned eyes, the pris'ner  
    Looked to the free-winged throng,  
With quivering wing he listened  
    To all their raptured song ;  
While, through the bars, the sun-rays  
    The little captive blest,  
And soft the gentle breezes  
    Him tenderly caressed ;

As if they felt the sorrow  
    That crushed his little heart,  
And would its keen pangs lessen  
    By bearing of a part ;  
Then, all its bars forgetting,  
    Fired by the joyous day,  
It poured, with thrilling rapture,  
    Its heaven-taught little lay.

But, see ! The nail is breaking !  
 The cage falls to the ground ;  
 The prison door bursts open,  
 The bird, scared, flies around ;  
 It looks, it rests a moment,  
 'Then, on exultant wings,  
 Its natal heaven-gift finding,  
 Its freeborn song it sings.

So now our prisoned spirits  
 Hear mate-calls far away,  
 And 'mid our bonds we listen,  
 Or sing our hope-born lay ;  
 And when death, 'mid our trembling,  
 Shall break our prison bars,  
 We'll wing to meet our fellows,  
 Who wait us 'mong the stars.

### FORGIVE MY TEARS.

(ON THE PEACE AFTER THE HUMILIATION OF  
 MAJUBA.)

PROUD Britain's flag, like quickening flame,  
 Fired into life our father's blood,  
 And crowned them kings on land and flood,  
 And England wreathed with peerless fame,  
 Till her strong arm clasped round the world,  
 All highways hers from shore to shore ;  
 We shrink now where our flag they bore  
 And unto foes defiance hurled ;  
 O peace at any price ! O years !  
 Forgive my tears !

Our cannons burst and engines fail,  
 Our vessels fit for aught but sea,  
 And swords our soldiers straight on knee,  
 While contracts tell their shameless tale.

Here placemen sit with folded hands,  
Their martinets the war-game play  
With men as "pawns" to throw away,  
Till red disaster stern demands  
The balance of accusing years ;  
Forgive my tears !

Russ smiles and thwarts our nerveless hand,  
And Treaty-powers stand half in fear,  
Questioning our will or might to dare  
Should war's red flood sweep o'er the land ;  
And suffering nations ask :—"O where  
Can bondmen find one valiant friend  
Whose generous aids will us defend,  
And strike for freedom,—strike nor spare ?  
In floods of words right disappears ;  
Forgive my tears !

A flaunting tale of rights maintained,  
Of feuds appeased and friendships knit,  
And Britain's honour largely writ  
Dares greet the world with blush unstained ;  
'Mid State-craft guile, the shameless lie  
Scarce hides its base inglorious head,  
The Transvaal laughs at England's dead,  
For hers the victor's lusty cry  
In war and 'stute diplomacy,  
For us the truth in after years ;  
Forgive my tears !

(ADDED IN 188—.)

Now party-spirit shakes the realm,  
Not hers our common-country's weal,  
But counsels, baffled, sternly feel  
'Tis hopeless block that fouls the helm,  
Where blinded faith in some great name,  
(Not righteous judgment in a cause,



Nor honour of our country's laws),  
Has o'er these tongue-gods might or claim,  
Who wreck the purpose of the years ;  
    Forgive my tears !

Round, pulpits sink, nor reverence claim,  
Men pandering to the fickle hour,  
Heedless of vows ; claiming as power  
The jester's art to build their name ;  
With flippant tongue they banter truth,  
Play with the dread, the dark around,  
And spice a joke from things profound,  
And speak of God as past His youth !  
Do angels from the circling skies  
Watch hireling placemen at their task ?  
Does holy rage, I dare to ask,  
Not in their breasts indignant rise,  
As Judas bands march through the years ?  
    Forgive my tears !

Gain bands with gain till all is sold—  
Right, conscience, truth, and brother-love,  
Where legal flaws their shelter prove,  
And God and heaven are less than gold ;  
While th' poor drag on a downward race,  
Forgotten ere they cease to be,  
And sink, as raindrops in the sea,  
No footsteps left their path to trace ;  
I hear their groanings through the years ;  
    Forgive my tears !

Dark in our mines whose fiery breath  
Lurks for its prey through all the hours,  
Our brothers spend life's priceless powers,  
Familiar but with wounds and death ;  
'Mid wrongs unknown, wear out their years,  
The death-roll growing in their sight,

Their names an entry ere the night,  
Their lot unbettered 'mid their fears,  
While early age their visage sears ;  
Forgive my tears !

O countless wrongs that throng around,  
O cries that reach no human ear,  
O scanty hope akin to fear,  
And laughters that like madness sound !  
Are there no hands to right the wrong ?  
No hearts to throb at sorrow's voice ?  
No tongue to teach grief to rejoice ?  
And bid the mourner burst to song,  
And wipe by love through nearing years,  
My brother's tears ?

O Statesmen rise for Britain's weal !  
Let faction's wild word-warfare cease,  
Let patriot zeal yield her increase,  
With hearts keen knit with bars of steel ;  
And rise ye faithful sons of heaven,  
Rise, battle for a nobler life,  
Have God your leader in the strife,  
With aids sublime to mortals given ;  
Your sires knew how to die for truth,  
Their armour clutch and fear no foe,  
The " Master " serve, and here below,  
Your cause shall rise in Godlike youth,  
Then hope surmounting all our fears,  
Shall dry my tears !

## WRITTEN ON A SPRING MORNING.

HAIL hope's glad morn ! My muse takes wing  
An' lilts her sang to dear auld spring,  
Noo buskin' a' our bowers,  
Spreadin' her gems ower moor an' fell,

An' gowden broom in cosie dell,  
    An' makin' glad the hours.  
The mavis tells the woods his joy,  
    His mate broods ower her nest,  
Sae happy in her love-employ,  
    Wi' faithfu' heart an' blest.  
    Their fare's still God's care still,  
    He hears their pleadin' cry,  
An' cleeds them, an' feeds them,  
    An' smiles to see their joy !

The bickerin' burn 'mid lustie bang  
Flings to the breeze his brave auld sang  
    That cheered oor sires of old,  
While brachens ower his wavelets bend,  
An' showers o' licht on a' descend,  
    An write God's name in gold.  
No dew of death is on spring's brow,  
    She knows no withered leaves,  
Life's pulse is throbbing in her *now*,  
    And shouts o' harvest sheaves ;  
    For summer's high glamour  
    Weaves round a mystic sway,  
And lures her an' cheers her,  
    To crown each passing day.

An' happy bairnies fu' o' glee,  
Bravin' the burn up to the knee,  
    Wi' fun mak' wild the air,  
Till my young days before me rise,  
Their dreams, their hopes an' cloudless skies  
    That now are mine nae mair !  
Spite o' my age an' hoary hair,  
    I'll mak' their gladness mine ;  
Joy wi' a' joy or tear wi' tear  
    Is breath o' the divine.

Rejoice then, gie voice then,  
Ye bairnies in your glee,  
Your chaffin' your laughin',  
May soon in sorrow flee.

Now winter's storms are a' forgot,  
An' growin' life crowds every spot,  
    An' buries a' her dead,  
For dumb creation upward yearns—  
Aiblins some far off hope discerns—  
    To this her toil is wed ;  
And unreached glories urge her powers,  
    She counts not by-past deeds,  
An' bids men sow love's tender flowers  
    Amang her waste o' weeds.  
    She presses, caresses,  
    And points to wood an' field,  
An' cries still, "this prize still—  
    Life higher life maun yield."

O earth ! is man ower proud to find  
The teachin's o' a central mind  
    That souls thy every voice !  
Each flower, each leaf its lesson brings,  
That law is no' the a' o' things,  
    Therefore we daur rejoice !  
The toilin' spring its harvest finds,  
    The nestlin's, buoyant air,  
Will He forget the lovin' soul,  
    And tarnished glory dare ?  
    He must still crown trust still,  
    An' a' our faes disarm,  
An' shield us an' beild us  
    Through every peltin' storm.

## A COMPARISON.

A CHILD who on some fallow  
Sees shining from afar,  
A flake of sun-lit glory,  
Like to a fallen star,  
Runs breathless—castles building  
That dazzle with “their glare”—  
But finds his hope-lit treasure,  
A bit of earthenware !

So hope’s proud plans and prospects  
That souled our youth’s bright day,  
Oft lie around us shattered  
Like bits of broken clay.  
The craven mourns, “ ’tis hopeless,”  
The Hotspurs curse their stars,  
The weary drop their weapons,  
The brave dare sterner wars,  
Counting as iron teachers  
Earth’s sorrows and its strife,  
Where man is nobler moulded,  
And fired with fadeless life.

## TIME.

SEE, an old man sits at a mystic loom,  
And with ceaseless might he toils,  
For he’s weaving out both the growth and doom  
Of a world’s triumphant spoils.  
Here he culls the hopes and the plans of youth,  
Fruits of age,—its gold and grime ;  
There he weaves the false with the threads of truth,  
Deeds of love with deeds of crime ;  
And he sings as he flings  
His shuttle along, this all-levelling song :—

"Proud man scorns my toils but, O, what does he know !

His light of to-day is to-morrow's jest ;  
Scans he how the rose and the hemlock upgrow,  
Strong twins, sternly nursed, on the earth's cold breast !

His sires, where are they ? On their graves he now treads,

Nor knows of their toils or their deeds of strife,  
Nor dreams in his night from such sowings of weeds,  
The flowers of to-day have all leaped to life.

But what care I, my light's from on high,  
It shines o'er the land and sea,  
A mighty Hand my life-task has planned,  
And that is enough for me."

Now he looks far off to the coming years,

With a smile on his features rough,  
Though his web be wet with a nation's tears,  
And her blood clots the warp and woof ;

With a steady swing he his shuttle throws,  
Songs and groans fall its click and clack,

And the treadles rise and the treadles fall,

And his arms never know a slack,  
For O, what reck's the carle if the pattern grows,  
Though men's hearts is the dust in the track !

And he sings as he flings  
His shuttle along, this proud seer-voiced song :—

"A nation may live in a single man,

For deeds are the all my strange web lays hold,  
His hand may throw off in his day's short span

A strand to his race more precious than gold,  
And the flag that may fall from his fainting hand  
May fire daring youth as a conquering band.

When sinks some proud cause, or a martyr dies,  
And hope bows her head at her sun gone down,

And men stagger back, *then* new toilers rise,  
 And morn's golden streaks show the victory won ;  
 For might has awoke to a grander reign,  
 As grass grows more rank on the field of th' slain.  
 My wrecks have their songs in their dark career,  
 For earth's *well* is more than a nation's death,  
 And night has a morn with its songs and cheer,  
 When men grasp their needs, start with stronger  
 breath,  
 For floods that o'erwhelm and lay waste to-day  
 But furbish the gold for years far away."

We are lost, appalled, at the old man's sway,  
 For a mist hangs o'er all his plan,  
 Yet each evening's gain mocks its yesterday  
 With a voice of proud hope to man ;  
 And he sings as he flings  
 His shuttle along, this all-glorious song :—  
 " Earth's weary past is a wail of defeat,  
 Thought through the ages grows cripple and old,  
 Men stagger onwards with slow, bleeding feet,  
 Pass like the dew or a tale that is told,  
 Asking the years but for one hope of day,  
 Seeing, unscanned, all my flowers on his way !  
 Mine, as of old, is to rear up the new,  
 Filling some niche in the temple of mind,  
 Ever unfolding the good and the true,  
 Leaving the dross and the darkness behind,  
 Moving the soul with an all-quickening breath  
 Till in her strength she demands 'Where is death ?  
 What is my life and the years I have trod ?  
 Less than a day in the life-time of God !  
 Nor will my hand fail its strange mystic power,  
 Bettering each day the high best I have done,  
 Strong to my post till the God-written hour  
 Cries, 'mid *well-dones*, 'Tis thy last setting sun !'  
 Joyful I'll rest when my grand task is o'er,  
 Blent with the years on the bright further shore."

TO A TAME TOAD I KEPT IN  
MY VINERY.

AY crawling pet ! The witless sneer—

“ Depraved of choice ! ”

Yet mine, to patient test in thee,

Love’s mighty voice.

What are thy joys ? Whate’er they be,

Shall I that little take from thee ?

O lesson-book of plan ! Thy hue

And crouchings save,

The acrid juice that clothes thee round,

Thy Maker gave.

Are these but accidents of life,

The outcome of creation’s strife ?

At dewy eve when darkness throws

Her veil o’er earth,

Thou takest up thy little task—

The bond of birth—

That little met, at rising sun,

Even thou canst sing—“ My task I’ve done ! ”

Thou comest at my well-known call

For food then nigh,

Thou fearest not I’ll turn on thee—

My past belie ;

While children, wondering, see me prove

In thee the conquering power of love.

So men around with darkened souls

Count not a clod,

For in their breasts there throbs, though low,

The pulse of God,

And our’s the task through love’s appeal,

To flame that pulse and God reveal !



## THE COTTAGER'S THOUGHTS.

Low in earth's vale we dwell,  
The big world's far away,  
The bolts that rift the craggy fell,  
Above us harmless play.  
Though cares oft press us sore,  
Contentment still is ours,  
And nestling round our cottage door,  
Spring up sweet tender flowers.

We hear the cuckoo tell  
That queenly summer's near,  
And voices whisper through the dell  
That bids away our fear.  
Health waits our toiling hands,  
Peace greets each setting sun,  
And love makes dear our household bands,  
And binds our hearts in one.

When day's hard task is o'er,  
Night gives us quiet rest,  
And more than dreams of that bright shore  
That waits when life is past !  
Here peace and hope are ours,  
Time fails to count our store,  
Our suns rear harvests from our showers,  
Ye rich ! What have you more ?

## AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS.

WITH reverence bow. Silence is noblest speech !  
Our heart's communings and our tears pressed back  
Are worthier offerings. Can soul touch soul,  
The dead re-visit sacred shrines and fill  
The air with tender ravishments, till we  
Forget the world, and through a silvery mist

Descry the far-off shore? Leave me my dream!  
Some spirit's near breaking the bars of flesh  
And blood, and whispering to my soul, "Be still,  
A nation's glory sleepeth here"; and on  
That grave proud Scotia lays her harp unstrung,  
And asks in vain for other hands to wake  
Its deathless chords, surging with song, to voice  
The secrets of the soul—her broken lights,  
The coming day, and kinship of the world!  
Great Son of Song, perhaps we read the "Why?"  
Of all thy fight. Thy cup was ours! Thy lips  
Must drain its bitter draught to know our woe;  
Thy heart must bleed that thou may'st win the crown  
Of nestling nearest to the human heart.  
The heritage of toil thy dower! Rain, wind,  
Hail, snow beat on thy brave, proud brow, and suns  
Poured sweltering heat till thy strong soul, fronting  
These brawny tyrants of the sky, awoke  
Thy voice and wove thy sorrows into song!  
Straight from thy heart thy lays leap to our own.  
Thy touch gives immortality. All things  
Are great beneath thy spell. The daisy now  
Has nobler voice than its own tale of God;  
'Tis linked with breaking hearts and manhood shame.  
Nature was thine to read and voice with joy  
Or woe in blended strain, as flower and weed  
Bestrew our path. Thy strong hand swept, unbought,  
Thy country's lyre, and freedom rang from all  
Her chords till man tramped earth with firmer tread.  
Or 'neath some "lingering star" thy harp sighed o'er  
A spirit fled, and men now bless the eve  
That song was born. Roused by thy patriot fire,  
A nobler life throbs all our veins, like floods  
From our old hills. Hope, joy, faith, fear, doubt—all  
Were thine, and in some page of thy strange life  
We read our little own, and love the tie  
That makes us one! Thy dark, unguarded words  
Are not the man, are but the dross that fools

Admire. Yet there, as flowers in desert waste  
Redeem the land from shame, pure gems arrest  
The gaze, reveal a touch of heaven, and tell  
How hard for thee to fail thy prophet-birth  
And mission to thy race. Thou blazing star  
Of orbit wild, scorning the measured tread  
Of lesser lights, some glorious "law" beyond  
Our ken still linked thee to the central sun.  
Our pulseless, stagnant souls—guileless of storms—  
Without a zero or a boiling point,  
Know not the storms that lashed thy struggling soul—  
Thy wrestlings in the giant strife. An hour  
Of thy strong agony and tears o'er sins  
And errors past, would shame the groans and sighs  
Of thousand lives of noon-day Christians.  
Thy Maker knew the iron and the clay,  
The good intent, the wilder passions' might,  
Thy dross dragged out by men who stained the name  
Of friend. For thee the tear—the lesser guilt,  
Thy country's more, where Law and Gospel both  
Sank drunk to sleep, crept through their useless lives,  
Their names uncherished and their graves forgot.  
Thou wert but Scotland draped in human form,  
In worth and dross, in glory and in shame,  
And thy wrecked lot now thunders in our ear,  
"My life's the tale the listening years must learn!"

### ON THE ROMAN ROAD, PEEBLES.

GRAND around me rise dark visions,  
Time throws wide his long-barred past,  
And I touch the far-off ages,  
Hear the war-trump's angry blast,  
March of men in endless tread,  
Fields of dying, fields of dead,  
Neath a frowning sky o'erhead.

Proud Gadeni\* from their moorlands  
Clutch their swords their home to save,  
Though they see their bleeding nation  
Slowly marching to the grave.  
Death his scythe will sterner whet,  
Other dews the heath will wet  
Ere their country's sun is set.

\* \* \* \* \*

Newby, groaning, bears the fetter,  
Tweed mourns o'er the glory fled,  
Manor shudders as her waters  
With her children's blood grow red ;  
But for freedom what avails?  
Strong the arm these lands assails,  
Roman discipline prevails.

Where those triumphs and earth-hunger,  
Victor's shout and vanquished's wail ;  
At our feet the spear lies broken  
By a hand behind the veil.  
Roman, Hillmen, Picts are fled,  
And a glorious peace instead  
Reigns where foemen fought and bled.

Strangely shout these far-off voices  
Of the Upwards' quickening breath,  
Where our fathers, brave, true-hearted,  
Fought the Roman to the death.  
Stronger stand we through their fight,  
Nobler children of the right,  
Taught to suffer or to smite.

Change, all hail ! here sweetness slumbers,  
Venlaw, Cademuir, Lee Pen rise  
Hoary wards of vale and meadow,  
And dear haunts the weary prize ;

\* The Gadeni, the early inhabitants of the counties of Linlithgow, Peebles, and parts of Dumfries, were conquered by the Romans in A.D. 81.

Uplands spread an endless choice,  
Valleys woo with witching voice,  
Woodlands bid the sad rejoice.

And I dream of sunny homesteads—  
All their thrifty, honest care,  
Manly toil and heart affections  
Dwelling as glad angels there ;  
Theirs the joy, the earthly bliss,  
Making every sorrow less,  
By love's deeds of helpfulness.

And now in the "lap of mothers"  
Lie our heroes yet to be,  
Some whose hands will bear our banners  
Far o'er valley, mount, and sea ;  
Loving freedom as a son  
Who man's brotherhood has won,  
O'er whose toil right shouts—"Well done !"

### THE CLOSING OF A LECTURE ON "RESOLUTION."

THE buried past ! Count not its length  
In days and years, but each intent,  
Firing the soul with iron strength,  
To win its crown with purpose bent ;  
The gained, the shunned, the lost,  
The cross, the battle-cost,  
The slain—these are the years we've spent !

Breasting our lot 'mid foes and fears,  
With doubt's dark cup filled to the brim,  
'Mid burned-out hopes and coward tears,  
No morning psalm nor evening hymn,  
Our stricken helplessness,  
And earth's cold bitterness,  
While every lamp of life burns dim ;

What then? Despair? Though shouts of foe  
 Tell of his might to sow the field  
 With trampled flags, while blow on blow  
 Cries "Where's your Captain, where your shield?  
 The true unflinching stand,  
 No choice is in their hand,  
 Firm to the end—a monarch band!

Failures—the shattered mirrors of our aims,  
 Our unblest prayers, our fruitless deeds,  
 And duty's oft unheeded claims,  
 'Mid mocking laughter of the weeds  
 From untilled, waiting ground,  
 And deepening darkness round—  
 Are not all *loss* or broken reeds!

A rage sublime, like 'venging steel,  
 May fire our shame o'er fields unsown,  
 Till struggle, dowered with nobler zeal,  
 A crowning victory may own;  
 And 'mid the wreck around,  
 We tread on firmer ground,  
 And faith clings closer to the throne.

Hail, fire-baptized! Lead on! He lives  
 Who from the darkness winnows light,  
 Writes "death, but no surrender!" gives  
 His "not attained," claims sterner fight,  
 Who counts each fall a gain—  
 A glory won from pain—  
 A beacon on the path of right!

Night crowns her sable brow with stars,  
 Snows mantle flowers in winter's breast,  
 And beetling cliffs and splintered scaurs  
 Give foothold for the eagle's nest,  
 Then wake sad soul and hope,  
 Though stumbling now you grope,

No struggle's little in His sight ;  
Then wait the passing of the night,  
    A nobler end we crave,  
    Than waits us at the grave ;  
He gave that hope, and He is Light.

### ON REVISITING TWEEDSIDE.

THRICE dear old scenes, proud Borderland,  
    Home of the true and brave,  
Where freedom found a swift right hand,  
    Her hallowed shrine to save ;  
Thy sons from stricken fields would come,  
With hope unquenched for hearth and home.

What ballad lore and weirds of fate,  
    And love-songs fill thy vales,  
While bloody trysts and clansmen's hate  
    Ghost all thy lonely dales ;  
E'en here, our pensive step may tread,  
Some unknown lover's treacherous bed.

O sunny lands of love and dreams,  
    I bless thy heritage,  
When youth pulsed through these aged limbs,  
    And hope with holy rage  
Sang her proud song—an angel lay—  
Life's path all sunshine—toil all play !

Thy glories moulded every thought,  
    Life thrilled each light and shade,  
And fancy's fingers through them sought  
    For truths that cannot fade ;  
And in my hours of teaching-toil  
These were a store of endless spoil ;  
Free from my lips they joyous fell  
On children's ears, that loved them well.



*From a Photo by*

**THE TWEED AT COLDSTREAM.**

*G. W. Gibson, Coldstream*





I caught the wild notes of thy fells,  
The music of thy streams,  
Thy storms were songs ; thy winds' fierce swells  
Gave voices to my dreams ;  
They threw their witching spell o'er me,  
And in their freedom I was free.

Thy abbeys, haunting all thy vales,  
Rose ever one vast prayer,  
Where hearts would fight through mists to God,  
And find sweet refuge there ;  
While every stream from moor and glen  
Would softly chant its dear Amen !

Vain man will hedge his fathers' God,  
Bind love to narrow creeds,  
Spurn those who tread some other road,  
As worse than poison-weeds ;  
Thy preachers with a mighty voice,  
In broader love made me rejoice.

His sun shone on Tweed's sister strands,  
Old England shared his smiles,  
And Scotia basked her mountain-lands,  
Her meads and dark defiles ;  
While birds from different shores would mate,  
And on one Father's bounty wait,  
Till " shivering Lap and sunburnt Moor "  
Rose brothers mine—heirs of one store !

## DEAR EARTH.

DEAR Earth !—God's child !  
Though dark thy ways, I see ,  
Thy care for every son  
That's born of thee ;

Nor do thy children starving wait,  
As suppliants at a rich man's gate.

The eye and ear,  
Entranced, thy glories seize,  
And in our dreams we live  
Fresh lives in these,  
Till fancy builds a world more fair  
Than thy proud halls of glory are.

Spring wakes the songs  
That slumber in thy bowers,  
And summer on her robes  
Pins countless flowers ;  
Then autumn stores his golden sheaves,  
And empty fields to winter leaves.

Thou grand dear home—  
Meet nursery of man,  
Where outlined pictures teach  
A growing plan,  
As if from flowers with petals dead  
A flower more glorious sprang instead.

Canst thou not tell  
Thy whence? Hast thou no song  
To soothe the aching hearts  
That count earth's throng?  
No arm, poor, struggling man to save?  
Thy best—a cradle—toil—a grave!

O, Earth! we claim  
Too much from thy weak hands;  
Thou canst not meet nor sate  
The soul's demands;  
Thou hast no secret in thy breast,  
Waiting the years to whisper rest.

Poor fare at best  
Our highest longings find,  
'Mid all we know and guess  
We yet are blind ;  
Distorted, dim thy teachings rise,  
Like leafless trees 'mid misty skies.

And thy sealed lips  
And hands unskilled to save  
Bid man not dream thee all,  
Nor yet the grave  
His final goal ; nor yet despair  
His soul shall fade in empty air.

As forms to forms  
In rippling streams respond,  
So broken, all thy emblems show  
The grand beyond ;  
Thou struggling mute, I guess thy voice,  
And in thy broken truth rejoice.

Thy empty hands  
Hint glorious truths to me,  
I upward look by faith  
And looking, see ;  
For in the Cross my soul can rest,  
And in that death my life be blest.

### TO A PESSIMISTIC POET.

WHY pour thy sorrows in thy songs,  
Earth's weary of her care,  
How will thy wails fire struggling throngs,  
Or dry a falling tear ?  
O Bard ! down grief's unnerving pen,  
Sing for the race, sing for us men ;  
We claim thy voice ! One strong "Hurray,"  
Straight from the heart, may win the day !


Mists do not always drape the sky,  
Storms have their times of rest,  
And spring with flowers will by and by,  
Drear winter's grave invest ;  
We dare not dream that all is wrong,  
And sighs and groans, man's noblest song.  
Lay hold of heaven through thy strange power  
And winnow joy from sorrow's hour ?

Teach not thy harp the voice of woe,  
Though earth be paved with graves,  
Life's nobler claims around thee flow,  
And love thy being craves ;  
Fling flaming words from thy strong lyre,  
And set our dormant souls on fire.

'Neath trial's cloud thy soul may hear  
The breath—the soul of things—  
Footsteps of joy soft sounding near,  
And beat of Angel's wings ;  
The very rains that drench the sod  
Nurse laughing flowers to star our road.

You listen to the rising morn,  
Talk to the setting sun,  
Walk o'er the earth with day new-born,  
And see proud glories won,  
And though heaven's minstrels wait on thee,  
Thy harp yet throbs in minor key !  
Be true, be just, son of the light,  
Is there not day as well as night ?

Dark soul, awake, faith has her lay,  
Our God is not yet dead,  
Earth's breast is hard whereon to lay  
A weary, aching head.



Why bid the echoes mourn? The night—  
Home of unholy things—  
Unsun the sky, but starry light  
Of hope 'mid darkness sings.  
When pelting snows the dull air throng,  
The true-souled bard gives braver song.

The halting wait on thee for aids,  
The downcast, words of cheer,  
The bondman, as the daylight fades,  
Hope-sick, strains listening ear;  
Thy voice must at the cradle sing,  
And when the passing soul takes wing.

With lays of hope glad earth's rough road,  
Our fainting hearts will hear;  
Help, smooth the pathway back to God,  
Bid faith tramp down our fear;  
As beacon-light a ship may save,  
Thy song may close a half-dug grave;  
And when thy harp throbs its last tone,  
Thou'lt meet thy song before the throne.

ANSWER TO A LETTER  
ASKING ME TO TAKE PART IN A SOIREE  
(Y.M.C.A.) AT COLDSTREAM.

YOUR welcome note cam' here yestreen,  
An' garred me rub my drowsie een  
To see hoo a' sides pressed—  
The pros an' cons—and here's the sum,—  
If weel, to your braw nicht I'll come  
An' do my little best.  
In life's young morn, bricht fancies fire,  
An' thoughts sublime the breast inspire,  
Wi' strong life a' aglow;  
But when the frame is weak an' auld,

The few locks grey, the pow maist bald,  
Thoughts come baith lame an' slow.  
Then dinna look for words aflame,  
Or fancy's gilded throng,  
Or visions filled wi' deathless fame,  
A'maist an angel's song ;  
The great here create here,  
Words born to free the race,  
But wee men like me then,  
Maun tak' a laigh down place.

For bonny Tweedside's dear auld sake,  
A braw, brave effort I wad make  
To meet a Border brither,  
To lay my shoulder to the wheel,  
To aid an' cheer some common weal,  
Where souls are bound together.  
My hairt grows young on Tweed's dear braes  
An' frae ilk beetling heicht,  
I catch a glimpse o' far-off days,  
Clad in a holy licht,  
An' hear the voice o' vanished love  
Invitin' me to come  
To mansions fair that wait above—  
The Christian's glorious home !  
Till yearnings fill my longing soul,  
An' near heaven's shores appear,  
Till o'er my cheek slow silent roll  
The hopeful, grateful tear.  
That rest still sae blest still,  
May weel our hairts enflame,  
An' warm us an' charm us,  
To that endurin' hame.

## LEARN THY BOUNDS.

TO MR J. M—R.

"LIFE's drifting on," you mutter,  
Your far-off goals grow dim,  
And fears you scarce dare utter  
Seal up your evening hymn.  
Is not thy golden dreaming  
Beyond thy stretch of hand?  
Thy man-force, not thy scheming,  
Will mete thy conquered strand.

Grass grows thy footsteps under,  
Rust eats thy lagging wheels,  
And still you, blinded, wonder  
Why failure dogs thy heels.  
If faithless to thy station,  
Why murmur at thy lot?  
The toiler heirs creation,  
The laggard stands forgot.

All can't be eagles winging  
The clouds' vast airy road,  
Nor larks their music flinging  
Low at the feet of God;  
Each takes its Heaven-set station,  
Glad in its own employ,  
And looks on wide creation  
As envious of its joy.

Think on thy clay-cold altars,  
Thy slow, unaiding hand,  
Then thy poor soul that falters  
Will learn to understand  
*Within's* our joy or sadness,  
Our hearts, our fount of light,  
We sun our sky with gladness,  
Or shroud our day in night.



Go, learn the joy of keeping  
 Love's path in good repair,  
 The sacred bliss of weeping,  
 Or drying up a tear ;  
 Some word of love right spoken,  
 Some aid 'mid earthly strife,  
 May heal a heart that's broken  
 And wing it on to life.

Or seek the dying, pressing  
 Eternity's dark door,  
 And win his parting blessing  
 While leaving earth's cold shore.  
 How stunted stands earth's glory  
 Before one act of love !  
 And pilgrims tell the story  
 To angel throngs above.

Time's short for man's high duty—  
 Ere yet we've well begun,  
 Our years are shorn of beauty—  
 Then, haste ! have life's task done.  
 Thy strength is helping weakness,  
 Thy health, assuaging pain,  
 Thy glory, Christ-like meekness,  
 Thy heaven—the fruits you gain.

### ADDRESS TO THE REMAINS FOUND IN A SUPPOSED PICTISH CAIRN.

(DISCOVERED BY THE AUTHOR IN A SMALL  
 PLANTATION NEAR HOPETOUN HOUSE,  
 AUGUST, 1876.)

O FOR the power to bid thy shade arise,  
 Thy world unfold to our deep longing gaze,  
 Thy hand to clasp, bring near thy far-off skies,  
 And touch the hoary eld that shrouds thy days,

And feel thee brother struggling through earth's  
    maze ;  
Hear of thy yesterdays, their fights and fears  
Pelting with ruthless hand thy troubled years,  
Till thy dark soul rebelled or shed despairing tears !

A serf, base born ? In limb and thought a slave,  
    Levelled with dogs, yet souled to spurn th'  
    disgrace,  
Who claimed no friend except the silent grave,  
    Where weary feet still end the rugged race ;  
Yet finding in some sister-slave the tie—  
The unsnapped link that binds man to the sky—  
That made thee strong, with song to baffle care,  
And for her smile would hopeful plan and sternly  
    dare ?

Or thine to rouse from tangled wood and glen  
    Forgotten braves, when evening's sun was low,  
'Mid plundered homes to rouse thy faithful men  
    To strew as autumn leaves the vengeful foe ?  
Or see the trailing garments of the sky  
    Grow red beneath the Norseman's ruthless  
    flame,  
And hear thy wife and babe's despairing cry,  
    And feel thy weakness in war's desperate game,  
And gnash thy teeth, yet proudly spurn the con-  
    quered's name ?

On this grey crag some eve, lost in the waste  
    Of years, you gazed with earnest questioning  
    eyes ;  
The proud eternal hills, with gold enchased,  
    In nobler grandeur upward seemed to rise,  
    Meet altars for earth's evening sacrifice .  
With beating heart you scanned the glowing west,  
And watched the sun fulfil his high behest,

While virgin clouds blushed 'neath his kingly smile  
As down heaven's slopes he trod to night's defile ;  
What woke the dream—a *world beyond* ! all fair,  
Whose glories through eve's open gates were  
flung,  
Where love was not a breath of passing air,  
But nobler than your prophet-bards e'er sung,  
And roused, yet sealed, the orphan cry upon thy  
tongue ?

What birth was thine that sanctified that hour,  
Waking the god within thy untaught breast,  
Breaking night's bars with strange mysterious  
power,  
Revealing self, to self an unknown guest,  
Whose stammering lips a thousand questions  
pressed ?  
Or, fancied memories of some long lost sphere  
Of life and love thy former self had known,  
Proclaiming thee a royal exile here—  
A drifted bark from some far haven blown,  
And yon bright sky the pathway to thine own ?  
Or, whisper from some pitying angel's guest,  
Who loving, through thy earthly prison pressed  
And touched thy soul and woke a strange, a glad  
unrest ?

When day—earth's image of her God—has sped,  
And her swart sister, night, draws curtains round,  
And queenly silence glides with noiseless tread,  
And bids her maidens hush each lagging sound,  
While drowsy flowers droop nodding to the  
ground,  
Some 'lated wight, plodding his homeward way,  
Girt by the gloom and mourning vanished day,  
Hears low the broken whisper of his name—  
A breath—'tis past ! he knows not whence it  
came ;

He starts, he peers around but all is still  
Like sleep of innocence, except the rill  
    Waking unwilling night to hear its lay  
    That found no ear amid the toiling day,  
So 'mid the darkness of thy country's creed,  
You trod life's path, saw quivering victims bleed,  
And fated poor the hungry fire-gods feed,  
    Rousing thy helpless wrath or boding fear  
    That bent thy head in merciless despair,  
Till from dear nature's shrine your spirit heard  
    The soft low whisper of a nobler tale,  
Unknown to haughty priest or prophet-bard,  
    Half visioned through the scarce uplifted veil,  
That bade thee shun their gods and this new vision  
    hail !

Yet baffled oft you gazed when dark on high,  
    You saw the tempest his battalions form,  
The sun dethrone, his death-winged lightning fly,  
    And trampled fields lie neath the conquering  
    storm ;  
Or when gaunt famine smote with bony hand,  
    And children in their sleep would weep for bread,  
While angry seas raved round the smitten land,  
    Mocked at the oar, and kept their treasure hid,  
You cursed your struggling lot, envied the dead.  
Pillowed in peace, in this lone, grassy bed.  
    Perhaps on some spring morn 'neath yon low  
    bower,  
    You watched the sun coax out the tender flower,  
And lark fly heavenward earth's proud lord to greet,  
    But frosts destroyed *that* at the evening hour,  
And *this* the hawk tore with his taloned feet.

And man, dragged from life's banquet-hall and  
    light,  
Pressed death's cold latch and vanished into night ;

Life rose on death and waiting death heired  
life,  
And nature's page was writ in blood and strife;  
Yet, 'mid the noon of thy uncertain night,  
You dreamed a Father his lost child would  
find,  
Would guide thy feet, and vision give the blind.  
Fainting, yet daring still, with broken prayers  
You beat heaven's silent gates 'mid doubts and  
fears,  
Thy hope—Perhaps He hears, perhaps He cares!  
Nor these in vain, you firmer felt the ground  
Beneath thy trembling tread, when all around  
Lay dark the night that wrapped thy mates in slumber  
sound.

Here musing once, at close of toiling day,  
You watched the waves troop o'er the ocean's  
breast  
In golden sheen with low and silvery lay,  
Then on the shelly strand lie down to rest,  
And all these shores with hoary fringe invest.  
In their sweet song you heard a loving voice,  
In yon bright sky you saw the home of peace,  
And in the breeze you heard the shout—"Rejoice!"  
That made the dream of heaven and sweet  
release;  
But while the scene was drawing thee on high,  
And speaking of a Love surpassing fair,  
That calmed the sea and lit the sunny sky,  
And bade all nature her bright garments wear,  
The trooping waves which laved the rippled sand,  
Laid softly, 'mid their rack, thy darling boy,  
Cold, stark and stiff upon the shelly strand,  
And with soft touches laved his little hand,  
As if life's spark from night they'd back decoy,  
Or teach thy soul, the giver can the gift destroy!

And *this* the answer from the dark Unknown !

A death-winged blow thy struggling soul to brave,  
And deeper darkness round thy footsteps thrown,

Thy home o'ershadowed, and thy boy a grave ?

Around no sign, no voice to bid thee cheer ;

That tomb a sneering satire on thy prayer !

And whiles, in thy despair and maddened thought,

You cursed the Being and the shrouded Power

That had unstarred thy sky, and left thee nought

But doubt, fear, pain and woe for earthly dower !

Like unhelmed bark you, 'mid the surging strife

Of hungering waves, from crest to trough were  
hurled,

You asked, why one poor, broken, blasted life

Should still be fettered to a rayless world,

And not eternal night around its end be furled ?

But time, thrice skilled physician to assuage

The anguish of a bleeding heart, applied

His blessed balm and gently soothed the rage

Of thy fierce woe, till all thy tears were dried,

Though memory to yield her trust denied.

But as bruised flowers their fragrant perfumes spread,

So thou hadst carried grief and brothered woe,

And whispered—"childless !" at a grassy bed,

Where hopes and dreams and plans were lying  
low ;

Taught by thy dead, a deeper love was found

That bettered thee, and blest th' unblest around,

And made thy name to grief a gladdening sound ;

In blessing, blest—in helping, helped ; you  
moved

A friend and guide, and in thy loving, loved.

And thus from man to man, and age to age,

And through the thousand labyrinths of thought,

Thy life, thy works still live through time's rough  
page,

With noble promptings into nobler wrought

That energize us still—a moral gain  
 That lends to stimulate or self restrain,  
 And o'er thy dust we write—*Thou hast not lived in  
 vain !*

NOTE.—See “Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland,” Session 1876-7. Mr Albert Butler, my nephew, gave me the first hint that some human bones had been found near the spot.

### THE CLOSING OF A LECTURE ON BIBLE LANDS (WITH MAGIC- LANTERN), NOVEMBER 1862.

My journey's past ! I hail once more  
 Our dear old Scotland's darling shore,  
 My own, my heather land ;  
 Hear freedom's song from every wave,  
 See mountains heaven's fierce tempests brave—  
 A wild unconquered band.

\* \* \* \* \*

Proud Nineveh, where is thy power—  
 Thou queen of empires in thine hour—  
 Thy riches and thy fame ?  
 Time's ground thy treasure into rust,  
 Thy glory, trodden in the dust,  
 And blotted out thy name !

Thou warrior shade—Imperial Rome—  
 Are all thy triumphs in the tomb,  
 Thy justice and thy worth ;  
 Ruled as a slave by sceptred priest,  
 Whose iron galls thy bleeding breast,  
 And grinds thee to the earth ?  
 Your sires in scorn cry “Romans, rise !  
 Win back your name—that heir-loom prize ;  
 Each man break off your chain,

And forge it into sword or spear,  
And from your breasts the slave-brand tear,  
And Rome be Rome again!"

By widowed Greece, amazed, we own  
Her soul in art, her songs in stone,  
While far beyond our ken,  
Rise deathless voices from the past,  
Of poets, sages ironcast  
Who quicken yet us men.  
Bright shines her sun just as of yore,  
But classic Greece is here no more,  
Her art—her manhood, fled!  
Her sons boast of their father's name—  
That *glory* but their country's shame—  
Farewell! Land of the dead!

Dread Sinai, 'mid thy bolts of heaven,  
My trembling soul by fear is driven  
To bleak, to dark despair;  
But when I see One "strong to save,"  
My sins hid in His empty grave,  
Thy lightnings cleave but air.

Jerusalem next claims a tear,  
Once loved of God—still to him dear,  
His place of agony;  
When suns were draped in deepest night,  
And angels wondered at the sight,  
Christ . . . dead . . . on Calvary!

One lingering glance I still must cast,  
Ere yet the holy vision's past,  
To Olivet's fair height;  
From whose green sward the Saviour rose  
To joy, to bliss that know no close,  
In yon pure realms of light.



There let that sight our souls inspire,  
By active faith—that heaven-lit fire—  
To reach life's blest abode,  
Where earth-born care and sin and woe,  
No resurrection morn shall know,  
We bask in smiles of God.

## NIGHT.

'Tis a night of storms and the frightened clouds  
In their terror scour the sky,  
But a darker night girds a lonely bed,  
Where a pale man sinks to die ;  
And a weird hag sits by that trembling soul,  
And she frowns at times or grins,  
As his past she reaps with a sickle keen,  
Sheaving up his crimes and sins.

"Fool! you dreamt that youth was an endless song,  
Life—a time for plots and schemes,  
But the song is sung and your plans are fled,  
Now's the waking time from dreams.  
Deep you laid your snares and the dupes came fast,  
And you clutched their toil-bought gold ;  
Hear! their groans beat wild in your dying ear,  
And the altar—hope—is cold.  
With the clock's *tick, tick*, low I hear the tread  
Of the grim old reaper, death,  
And the air grows chill and the fire sinks low,  
And his 'rattle' chokes thy breath.

"Where the hungry ghouls who around thee  
pressed—  
Daring mates of viler host—  
Till the darkening night wore a deeper frown,  
And your angel, pained, wrote—*lost* !  
Can you meet your bonds with the dark Unseen ?  
Have you learned the cheat at last?

Can your gold buy peace, or your fields give more  
Than a grave when life is past?  
Ay! your stately home will forget your name,  
Time out-wipe its songs and mirth;  
And the owls will hoot in its crumbling halls,  
And the ravens stain its hearth.

"Yes! your life had aims and you reached your  
goals,  
Naught to you the means or way,  
But one act of love were a thousand fold  
Now more dear to you than they.  
Oh, you've willed your hoards to the sick, and heaven  
Will respect the golden key,  
Look! the angel writes with an angry pen,  
'But you did it not to Me!'

"Wretch, a sweet young life gave you all her love,  
But you threw your toy away;  
And you gave her shame for her girlhood faith,  
And a grave at opening day.  
Had your son and hers e'er a father's love?  
Left a waif to want and pain,  
Now he drags a life that is worse than death,  
'Mid the clank of th' felon's chain."

"Hound of hell!" he shrieked, "flee my sight!  
begone!"  
But her eye flashed a stormier light,  
And the winds mourned hoarse through the silent  
hall,  
And still wilder grew the night.  
Like a hound from leash at her throat he sprang,  
"Die, you wretch," he, frenzied, cried;  
But the vision fled; then in wild despair,  
He fell back and groaning died.

## TO AN EARLY BUTTERFLY.

HAIL bright sunflake, hope on wing,  
Child of Eden, voice of spring,  
Flying flower o'er earth's glad face,  
Music clad in living grace,  
Heaven and earth are blent in thee,  
Past and future speak to me.

O thou voice of childhood fled,  
Whisperer of summers dead,  
Life's young mornings golden rise,  
Dewed with hope 'neath sunny skies,  
Where glad love and gleesome mirth  
Challenged heaven to better earth !

In thy shield 'gainst wintry storm  
Eye could trace thy future form,  
Prophecies in folded wing,  
Waiting but for coming spring,  
And my prisoned hopes demand  
Freedom in a fairer land.

Earth's forsaken, and her past  
Off like tattered robes are cast,  
Now in angel garments clad,  
Heaven is thine and thou art glad ;  
Sunshine clothes thy happy bowers  
With a galaxy of flowers.

And I've learned that grander song,  
Glory grows earth's path along,  
For a broader life awaits  
Ever at each morning's gates,  
And in duty's heaven-forged chain,  
I a nobler freedom gain.

Out of shattered dreams I rear  
New-born thought for new-born sphere,  
And I soar with soul intent  
Till my weary wings are spent,  
But beyond in grandeur rise  
Sun-clad peaks in cloudless skies.

Earth hath answered all to thee,  
Will heaven prove less true to me,  
Love will guide my steps aright,  
Day will leap from arms of night,  
From each fall I'll stronger rise,  
Each fierce storm leave fairer skies,  
Till life's dawn will pale its glows  
'Mid life's bright prophetic close,  
And like thee, redeemed from earth,  
Revel in a higher birth.

### THE SAGA OF TUTAN.<sup>1</sup>

DARK the night sank round Tormachan,<sup>2</sup>  
And unwearied fell the snow,  
While the tempests through the forests  
Rushed like hill-men on the foe,  
Till the trees, like mankind, driven,  
Flung their groans as prayers to heaven.

But within were joy and gladness,  
Yule logs burned, and mistletoe  
Tempted young men and blythe maidens,  
All its witching charms to know ;  
Laughing lips with kindred meeting,  
Loving hearts through kisses greeting.

Round hung trophies of men's daring,  
Sword and spear in stern array,  
Each one burdened with a story  
Of dire deeds in bloody fray,

Where some Chieftain towered a god  
Ere he, vanquished, bit the sod.

Now the old year, worn and feeble,  
Fain would win his longed-for rest,  
In the night-land with his fathers,  
In their misty garments dressed ;  
While his heir, young, ardent, hopeful,  
Stood impatient at the door,  
Big with dreams of golden harvests,  
Waiting but his secret lore ;  
Blinded dreamer ! Failures wait thee,  
And thy triumphs will not sate thee.

Once again the good, old Breir <sup>8</sup>  
Gathered round his groaning board  
All his children—thus he claimed them—  
Serf of tillage, men of sword ;  
They were his, and proud he'd own it,  
For their faith and deeds had won it.

Ay, they loved him for his goodness,  
Served him with a joyous spirit,  
For he knew none by their fathers,  
Each true hero was his brother,  
And his sword was each man's shelter.

Where a burden, he would lift it ;  
Where a wrong, his arm would right it ;  
Where help needed, he would give it ;  
Words of hope, his lips would speak them ;  
Words of warning, he would deal them ;  
Hours of sorrow he would share them ;  
And life's eve he'd seek to gladden.  
Children knew him, loved, yet feared him ;  
Manhood's prime and age revered him ;  
And they proudly called him, " Father,"  
And he, lovingly, them children.

Then the old Chief, 'mid his war-men,  
Men whose sires had with him bled,

Thus addressed them, though thought  
whispered,

He was thinking of the dead,  
And of bards whose fiery spirits  
Caught the roar of battle throng,  
Caught the clash of spear and war-axe,  
Charming all to burning song !

“ Ay, the ‘ log ’ once more is blazing,  
And the Yule-tide calls for gladness ;  
In the fields we’ve slain the bison,  
Trapped the wolf, and speared the wild boar,  
And the shag-coat of dread Bruin  
Shields us from the angry tempest ;  
And our foes, though late, have wisely  
Given their swords and spears to slumber !

“ In good cheer let’s drown our trials,  
Bid the Cro-court don its night-cap,  
Cast away all family jarrings,  
Let them sink as stones in ocean,  
For life’s short and scant its pleasures ;  
Bid the year that now is passing  
Carry with him all our quarrels ;  
Bid the year whose steps are nearing  
Bring a flood-tide of good feeling.”

Then the Breir called for silence,  
(All obeying but the boarhounds  
That held warfare with the children,  
O’er some ragged haunch of red-deer),  
And bade Clutha, bard of Beltane,<sup>4</sup>  
Sing of Tutan some old *Saga*  
That had cheered their brave, old fathers,  
As they sat when life’s dull evening  
Hurried on the closing darkness  
That had ne’er a coming morning.

Then bard Clutha thus responded :—

“ I will sing of our high father  
Tutan, lover of the oak-tree,  
Ruler of the chase and forest,

Him my song will hold in honour !

He (once standing on yon green height,  
Where the Cornie gives her waters  
To the silvery arms of Fortha),  
Listened to the throbbing music  
Sung by valley, stream, and woodland,  
Fleecy cloud and stable mountain ;  
Now it fell in softest murmur,  
Then it rose like voice of tempest,  
Or the tramp of warring billows.  
Each in doing seemed the grander,  
Each was but the same heart beating  
Out its changing song of gladness.  
Not such songs for us poor mortals  
With ears dulled by strife and tumult,  
Shouts of chase and clang of battle,  
But the dew's soft evening footfall,  
And the waves of daylight breaking  
On the rosy shores of morning,  
Reach the gods abreast the thunder,  
Or the roar of gnawing waters,  
Crunching rocks and helpless sea-cliffs.

Wearied earth was wooing slumber  
As he watched the *day's eye* setting ;  
'Rapt, he 'joyed its silent grandeur,  
As a god would wish to perish,  
If, perchance, that doom awaits them !  
Could he add another glory,  
Voice his rapture—flash his soul-thought—  
Could he paint a matching eye-brow,  
Spanning heaven—with glory tinted—  
Resting on Ben Voirlich northward,  
And Ben Lomond towering westward,  
Holding 'neath its circling mantle  
Meadows, moorlands, misty mountains,  
Handing down his name for ages  
To the proud Gadeni's children ?

Then he gave the winds this message :—

'Elfland, send me here your good folks !  
Tutan says it ! come, or tremble !'  
As a river gather streamlets,  
So he Fairies, Kelpies, Brownies,  
Pookas, Trows—all hands to aid him,  
'Go,' he cried, 'search earth and water  
For the brightest, richest, colours,  
For a wonder in the heavens !'

CHORUS (*by the company*).

O the Good Folks' skill, when they have the will,  
Brings us sunshine all the day,  
But, alas, their frown makes our sun go down,  
And our gold turn into clay.

CLUTHA (*continuing*).

Swift they scattered each one eager  
To out-vie some foe or rival,  
For the Good Folks, 'mid their goodness,  
Have a wondrous knack of hating.  
On returning rich in treasure,  
All were heirs of loving greeting,  
Words of praise for heavy laden,  
Yet no wrath for those less burdened.  
Thus he pleased the airy army,  
That had met his heart's high dreaming.

Home they all sped on to Elfland,  
Playing cantrips on their journey,  
Changing warriors' clothes to matrons',  
Making farmers court their crummies,  
Pouring on them countless kisses ;  
Setting crones round pots a-dancing ;  
Sewing young men up in blankets,  
Raining on them showers of emmets,  
'Neath whose venom'd cruel biting  
Roared their victims 'mid their torture,  
While the elves grew mad with laughter.  
O how busy went their fingers



Tying maidens' hair to bed-posts ;  
Here they changed the cream to water ;  
There the eggs made into snowballs ;  
Cocks went crowing, hens a-clucking,  
Dogs and donkeys adding music,  
Till the ravens in their terror  
Joined the owls in piercing wailings ;  
Or in bosoms of glad mothers,  
Left some shrivelled dwining changeling,  
Just as whim or mischief pleased them.

But there tarried one sly fairy,  
'Mong her sisters called Flo Madcap,  
Loved because of all her loving,  
Feared because of all her tricking.  
'Neath a toadstool sat she hiding,  
Watching Tutan at his toiling,  
Dreaming o'er his growing fancy.  
Then the god his faithful consort  
Saw swift running wild with terror,  
On the air her tresses streaming,  
And her hands with anguish wringing,  
Claiming help for love and pity,  
For a mouse had seized the day-room,  
With wild eyes of liquid midnight,  
And a tail—' O do not name it !  
Wriggling, writhing, like a serpent ' ;  
And for payment, should he kill it,  
Thrice three kisses she would give him !  
Quick he rose, though strangely musing,  
How a mouse could make her tremble  
Who made him—a god ! be silent !  
Then the mouse he inward honoured,  
And its power to frighten envied !

#### CHORUS.

Sirs, it is no joke how the women folk,  
Ever rule and drive us men,



For a young maid's smile will a youth beguile,  
And when married—O what then !

CLUTHA (*resuming*).

Then the fairy from her hiding,  
As a mighty eagle darted,  
Clutched the pot of thousand colours,  
And off bore it in her talons.  
Th' god returning missed his treasure,  
Saw his dream fade into vapour.  
Then on man he thought a moment—  
Man the child of daily sorrow—  
Morn and eve but changing burdens,  
And the grave his longed-for resting !  
And the god by trial smitten,  
Vowed his aids to sons of anguish,  
Through life's misty days and darkness.  
Then he pondered—guessed the culprit,  
Saw far off the hurrying eagle,  
Saw the vessel downward hanging !  
'O wild Madcap ! Pest of Elfland,  
Know thy beauty will not save thee !'  
Hot rang out his words of anger ;  
Woods in terror drooped their branches,  
And the startled echoes trembled,  
Hardly knowing how to answer.  
Not my song to give his thund'rings,  
Nor your ears from me to hear them.

Swift he soared a golden eagle,  
With eyes flaming, while his broad wings  
Round sent whirling all the cloud-rack,  
As the winds toss leaves in autumn.  
Hot he chased her wildly fleeing,  
Dreading now the god's dire vengeance,  
While the vessel tossing, swinging,  
Round its hue-dust wildly scattered,  
And the winds, charmed with its dazzle,  
Sowed it free o'er field and mountain.

Now Flo seeks the far-off heavens,  
Winds and clouds with strong wing cleaving,  
Then to earth-shades swiftly swooping,  
Lonely glens and mountain passes,  
Tutan still relentless chasing.  
Needless trace their strong-winged struggle,  
Fear and Anger in wild conflict,  
Till poor Madcap threw the casket  
To the breezes, dropped the eagle,  
Joined a band of happy midges  
O'er a babbling streamlet dancing,  
In this lowly garb escaping  
The fierce anger of the oak-god ;  
As the pine tree in the valley  
Safely in the sunshine basking,  
Hears the tempest thrash the mountains  
And hold captive all their strong-holds.

## CHORUS.

O misfortunes wait on the rich and great,  
As the tempests scourge the hills,  
But no storm assails the sweet slumbering vales,  
Where the lowly toiler dwells.

CLUTHA (*resuming*).

Home he turned a proud . . . god . . . baffled !  
On himself reproaches heaping,  
On the mouse, and on his consort.  
Much he feared his good-wife's banter,  
Where his feats by moor and forest,  
Deeds of daring with the demons,  
And the ghouls that rob the graveyards ?  
When he'd name them she would whisper  
'And your contest with poor Madcap' ;  
More, the Shell-Hall joke and laughter,  
Most, the jeering of the demons.  
Wisdom whispered,—'Keep thy counsel,'  
And perhaps the playful vixen

Will in terror keep her secret,  
Lest he, roused, should seek for vengeance,  
And degrade her 'mong her fellows,  
Turn her to a drudging Brownie,  
Or a wandering, outcast Spunkie,  
Hateful Trow, or wicked Pooka,  
Or a tear-eyed, wailing Banshee,  
Far from Seely's <sup>5</sup> happy homestead.  
As he reasoned so he acted,  
Made some tale of Shell-Hall gossip,  
Ever dear to ear of goddess,  
And not hated by her sisters,  
Whom on earth we title women.

## CHORUS.

But, alas, for Flo, it was hers to know,  
Hidden 'neath a lichen grey,  
That the fates guilt chase, and will win the race,  
As our dogs hunt down their prey.

CLUTHA (*continuing*).

Summer came with showers and sunshine,  
Wrote her name in golden letters  
Over crag and fell and mountain,  
And the days were robed in splendour,  
When a wonder startled heaven,  
Woke a shout from all earth's children  
Till the air with joy was ringing,  
For a glory, earth yet knew not,  
Now was hers in endless beauty;  
For, lo, o'er the wavy landscape,  
Moor and meadow and deep valley  
Where the *eye-brow* dust had fallen,  
Flowers sprang blooming—daisies, lilies,  
Broom and blue-bells, golden crowfoot,  
Woodbine, cowslip, ragged robins,  
While our purple, dear old heather  
Wrapped the shoulders of the mountains,

Till the heavens almost murmured  
At earth's glory, hers nigh mating.

Then poor Madcap, hoping, fearing,  
Wove a flower-wreath for dark Tutan,  
And with timid footsteps sought him,  
Pled for pardon, sought and found it.  
On his brow she placed the circlet,  
And her heart-thanks made it sacred.  
Then with grateful love she kissed him,  
Whispered, 'Claim this as the *Wonder* !  
I've the secret, and I'll keep it !'  
Shed a tear of joy and left him,  
Feeling, as day springs from darkness,  
Good may rise—a flower—from evil !"

Clutha, bowing, softly muttered,  
"Thus were flowers and blooms created,  
And my Tutan Saga's ended."

#### CHORUS.

If the gods have care as their daily fare,  
Let our arms like theirs be brave ;  
Bid our setting sun see life's task well done,  
Ere we sleep in th' dreamless grave.

#### NOTES.

1. *Tutanas* ; a god of the Druids. The oak was his favourite tree.
2. *Tormachan* ; the hill of the Brownies (*Tor noch gan*). The old name for *Parkhead*, Abercorn, was *Machan Ha* ; the home of the Brownies. See the old Session Records of Abercorn.
3. *Breir* ; a title corresponding to Squire or Laird.
4. *Beltane* ; see note 14, under "The Last Sacrifice."
5. *Seely* ; the happy home of the Fairies.

## HE WILL LEAD THEE.

THERE, brother, is thy path to tread,  
Dark, trackless, rough and long,  
No flower to charm, no star o'erhead,  
Nor voice nor song  
To bid thy staggering steps be strong.

He knows the way! enough for thee  
This word of royal cheer,  
"Even as thy day" thy strength shall be;  
Then down each fear,  
Thy God walks with thee ever near.

Strength waits at yonder steep ascent,  
Patience, for all thy pain,  
Light, when thy struggling faith's nigh spent,  
Each loss, a gain,  
Some foe there crushed in life's campaign.

The path where sleeps the golden light  
And flowers play with the breeze,  
And rippling streams with sunflakes bright,  
While fields and trees  
Fling storms of sweetest song to please,

Is not the path for heroes born;  
The camp, the battle-field,  
'Mid battered helm and garments torn  
And dented shield,  
Where men may die but never yield,

There souls grow strong from hour to hour  
And braver in the fight,  
Dealing their blows—an iron shower,  
For God and right,  
And sin down-trodden in their might.

Slow toils the sculptor, but each stroke  
Throbs with his soul's intent,  
He sees an angel in that block—  
A prisoner pent,  
Waiting until his bonds are rent.

So toils thy Maker ; nor in vain  
Thy stubborn warfare's given,  
Each care, each loss, each grief and pain  
Thy soul will leaven  
To nobler life—a peer of heaven.

Day's nigh ! Press on from height to height  
With broadening vision blest,  
All glowing in a fairer light,  
And nearing rest,  
And faith exulting in thy breast.

Time past ! On death's bright further shore,  
Fresh from life's battle-field,  
Thy sword will sleep for evermore,  
Laid down thy shield,  
Then thine the crown thy fight concealed.

### THE POET'S MISSION.

TO MR ARCH. AMOS, A BROTHER RHYMER.

HIGH task to strike the poet's lyre,  
To chain in words the living fire  
That glows on nature's tongue,  
To dare where human foot ne'er trod,  
A listener near the throne of God,  
To learn the angels' song ;  
To be a quickening, guiding voice  
To waiting, groping earth ;  
To bid her baffled sons rejoice,  
And heir a nobler birth.

No craven, fear driven,  
 'Tis his to lead the van,  
 His singing, life bringing  
 To doubting, sinking man.

\* \* \* \* \*

His purposed soul must cleave the skies,  
 His magnet spell lure us to rise,  
 His voice, crush every wrong ;  
 No flattering guile, no sordid aim,  
 No party feuds nor toil for fame  
 Must sire his burning song ;  
 The inner church his fane must be,  
 High priest of wide humanity,  
 All sheltering 'neath his pale ;  
 Seer of the race, not of a class,  
 His, all pure gold, no burnished brass,  
 His tread, no serpent's trail ;  
 Proud bearing all his own tasked lot  
 With manly heart and brave ;  
 Singing his song, his toils forgot,  
 His mission but to save !  
 A poet's name, a poet's fame,  
 May be a thing worth having,  
 But helping man to do his *can*  
 Is worth the toil of living.

'Tis his to word with Godlike art,  
 The unvoiced longings of the heart,  
 Its instincts of a home ;  
 Lay nature tribute at his feet,  
 From every gall to win a sweet,  
 And shout heaven's free-call—"Come !"   
 Though burning stars may rule the night  
 And glorious suns the day,  
 He reads in man a deathless might  
 That mocks the word—Decay !



He knows still and shows still,  
'Mid life's strange doubts and fears,  
O'er death's hour, the grave's power,  
Eternal are man's years.

His touch reveals earth's deeper things,  
He drinks from nature's secret springs,  
His hands, endowed, bestow  
On common things celestial birth,  
As rising suns clothe heaven and earth,  
In beauty's radiant glow.  
He breathes, and nature's glorified,  
The good survives, the base has died,  
And growing thought responds  
And wakes the god that sleeps within,  
That makes us with the angels kin,  
Though fettered hard with bonds ;  
Till struggles speak of training here,  
Our falls, as teachers given,  
And longings point a purer sphere,  
Our aspirations, heaven !  
Thus watching and catching,  
The whispering voices round,  
He learns there, discerns there,  
A soul in every sound.

Or, faithless to his mission here,  
He tunes his lyre for passion's ear,  
And takes unholy fire  
And flames the hell-dross of the soul,  
Crowns self supreme—life's highest goal,  
Its heaven—fulfilled desire ;  
Till daring in his downward stride,  
A ruling God he laughs aside,  
Sneers life's a worthless game,  
Till angels ask in pained surprise,  
Why sleep the thunders of the skies  
'Mid heaven's insulted name ?

And darkly oft with biased ear;  
He wrongs some wail of earth,  
Deaf to her thousand songs to cheer  
And give soul-gladness birth.  
He clothes some lust as angel fair,  
Gives wanton lips their songs,  
Nor heeds some sister's wild despair,  
'Neath all her cruel wrongs.  
We mourn then, him shorn then  
Of his celestial light,  
His story—a glory  
Lost in a starless night.

High then's his task and great his might !  
A heaven to raise—a hell to smite  
Lie in his strong right arm.  
He bids the patriot's blood run fire,  
He nerves the martyr for the pyre,  
Gives death a mystic charm ;  
And o'er the closing grave he hears  
Above the mourning throng,  
An angel whispering 'mid his tears,  
The resurrection song !  
Then singing—faith winging,  
We learn with throbbing breath,  
Though night here may blight here,  
Death is no longer death !

And when his tongue is hushed in death,  
His life-winged words have quickening breath  
For nations yet unborn,  
Who'll hear his voice on every shore,  
'Mid summer's calm or winters roar  
Ensoul their rising morn ;  
And forward through the sweeps of time  
As very gods they'll dare,  
And grandly with a hope sublime  
Their undomed temple rear ;

Till ages are stages  
 Humanity counts years,  
 On flowing and growing,  
 Till the "Amen" appears.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yet deeper in the human heart,  
 Beyond time's dark all-shifting art,  
 Lies an unchanging sea,  
 The mothers of our savage sires,  
 The Indian by his midnight fires,  
 Are all akin to me !  
 No new affection can be born,  
 Nor from our breast can one be torn,  
 Their realm hath no decay ;  
 And he who sings from soul to soul,  
 Holds all the years that time may roll,  
 In one undying sway.  
 What arm then metes the poet's power ?  
 What life has stronger breath ?  
 A voice that claims a heavenly dower,  
 And scorns the arch-foe death.  
 And in the far-off giant years,  
 His griefs will sacred rise,  
 And men will count his bitter tears,  
 As their own sacrifice—  
 His suffering an offering  
 Upon the earth's high shrine,  
 That names him and claims him,  
 A breath of the divine !

## WRITTEN DURING A FALL OF SNOW.

STERN winter's arms are round us,  
 Pale earth receives his chain,  
 And dumb we strike our colours  
 And own his icy reign ;

The sparkling stars that gem the night  
Alone defy his sovereign might.

Where's spring's pure opening beauty  
That wreathed the joyous earth?  
And autumn songs of gladness  
At harvest's fruitful birth?  
All like a youthful dream are fled,  
And widowed earth weeps o'er her dead.

The woodland harp lies broken,  
The sky is leaden grey,  
The trees bend ever wailing,  
Their garments in decay;  
And 'mid the storm bare arms they fling  
To angry skies, and plead for spring.

Earth hears no voice of promise,  
Hers but death's sullen roll,  
And feels like man deserted,  
When love has fled his soul;  
Till wearied suns pale at the sight,  
And hide themselves in earlier night;

While sprites of storm and tempest  
Triumphant bear the sway,  
'Mid shouts and wails and darkness  
Make ruin 'mid their play;  
As tyrants glory in their power,  
And crown with woe their little hour.

Now, soft as tread of angels,  
The snowflake leaves the skies,  
And fall on earth's cold bosom—  
A blessing in disguise.  
Still thicker grows the garment  
Spread gently from above,

Like "little deeds of kindness"  
 That forge the links of love,  
 Where souls oft find 'mid earth's cold sphere,  
 A foretaste of sweet heaven's glad year.

Now safe the flower-life nestles,  
 Nor fears the ice-robed king,  
 But waits the voice of heaven  
 To wake it in the spring,  
 To twine a wreath for earth's fair brow,  
 Though sad and pale she slumbers now.

Thus may my soul be sheltered  
 In sorrow's evil day,  
 Glean light from out the darkness,  
 And strength for life's rough way,  
 And know what's winter oft to sight,  
 Is summer seen in faith's pure light.

## THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN.

THREE cronies round a blazing fire,  
 With jokes lent wings to time,  
 Then 'greed they'd let wild fancy flow  
 In scraps of homely rhyme;  
 An idle sport—a jest—a dream—  
 "The World turned upside down" the theme.

### THE FIRST SPEAKER (*Social Confusion, &c.*).

One morn I woke, the world was changed,  
 But I the same remained,  
 And now I laughed and then I wept,  
 As something pleased or pained,  
 The servants on the sofa lounged,  
 The "boots" the master played,  
 The cook at head of table sat,  
 The mistress served as maid.

A man mistook his better half,  
The child forgot its mother,  
And honest men their hands found in  
The pockets of another.  
Here one resolved to hang himself,  
Because he was sore wed,  
He bought a rope, made right the noose,  
But hanged his wife instead.

The Press spoke nought but manly truth,  
No fads our bailies planked,  
And scholars wild with savage glee,  
Their screaming teachers spanked.  
The sick rebelled, the doctors ran,  
The patients sped the faster,  
And caught them quick, then dosed them well  
With powders, pills and plaster.

Inspectors were sent back to school  
To learn the art to teach,  
And parsons' lives were found to square  
With what they lived to preach ;  
And thieves, engowned, sat on the bench,  
With judges, jails were panged,  
The lawyers trod the endless stair,  
And "bobbies " all were hanged.

The curates shared the bishop's pay,  
Both ran in traces well,  
And sextons donned the bands and gown,  
And parsons rang the bell.  
The Free, U.P.'s and K.H.B.'s  
Sang thousand hymns together,  
And swore they were the dearest friends,  
And hugged and kissed each other.

And M.P.'s stood a patriot band,  
No party beat its drum,

And "gutter sparrows" cooed like doves,  
 And ignorance was dumb.  
 Old Labby and Balfour like twins  
 Slept in each other's arms,  
 And Wilfred found M'Ewan's ale  
 Had o'er him witching charms.

And publicans with willing hands  
 Served whisky while they prayed  
 That toppers might T.T.'s become,  
 And Satan curse their trade.  
 The dead refused the grave's lone rest,  
 And in their winding shrouds,  
 They thronged our marts and music halls,  
 In ghostly, silent crowds.

Earth told at eve a bitter tale,  
 We pressed our beds in sorrow,  
 And 'bodings dark gave sleepless hours,  
 And fears for coming morrow.

SECOND SPEAKER (*Groans of Creation, &c.*).

Here's my song in easy measure,  
 Let dumb nature have her say,  
 Sing the truth—earth's noblest treasure—  
 Of confusion's holiday ;  
 With a heart to live and learn,  
 And from trifles wisdom earn.

"Upside down," the earth one morning  
 Greeted eye and ear and sense,  
 All our past experience scorning,  
 Rousing thought in numskulls dense ;  
 Would this doubt-state last for ever,  
 As the will of the All-Giver ?

Men had lost the power of speaking,  
 Helpless roamed they seeking rest ;

While the beasts their trammels breaking,  
 Turned man's kingship into jest.  
 Cabbies, carters toiled in traces,  
 Scourged and lashed by unseen whips,  
 While they ran with glowing faces  
 Not made red by brandy "nips";  
 Hungered sped they on the road,  
 Fainting, dying 'neath their load.

Whippers in, grooms, and hunt-master  
 Fled apace from baying hounds  
 That pressed on now faster, faster,  
 With their space-devouring bounds;  
 And the dames that hunted foxy,  
 Now were hunted as his proxy.

Beasts with speech were strangely gifted,  
 Dread the wrongs their lips revealed,  
 Men were stunned, while stern was lifted  
 Up the veil that all concealed;  
 Horses told of nights unsheltered,  
 Over-driven for weary hours,  
 Grain sold; tortured, in foam sweltered,  
 To drag forth their worn-out powers;  
 Till to heaven rang out their moan,  
 Like a world's accusing groan!

Here a doctor—skull part off him—  
 Lay firm bound with throbbing brain,  
 Bunnies, curs and grunterns scoffing,  
 Gloried in his writhing pain;  
 Then an old ape, bravoed winning,  
 Brandished free a carving knife,  
 Wise he chattered, sagely grinning,  
 As he sought the seat of life;  
 "'Twas an old search, well they knew it,<sup>1</sup>  
 Th' patient, sure, alone would rue it."



Shamed and humbled stood our nation,  
Cruelty ran through the years,  
And from groaning, pained creation  
Rose a call for angels' tears ;  
Till we asked stern of each other,  
Was the mute world not man's brother ?

Swords by mystic hands were broken,  
Powder took long hours to burn ;  
Wood and hemp—the hangman's token—  
Their dark task refused with scorn ;  
Fields of grain loud sang while waving,  
“ We make dumb fierce hunger's cry ”  
While their sisters, almost raving,  
Longed unfruitful there to die.  
Ere man out a demon tore  
Earth to curse from shore to shore.

Social life, its honied lying,  
Was to bitter truth translated,  
All its honour, selling, buying,  
At their true price sternly rated.  
Men who yesterday were noble,  
Dames who drove their coach and pair,  
On their own shanks had to wobble,  
'Mid the rabble's vulgar stare.  
Waifs were near where angels dwell,  
Church folks hymning marched—ah, well !

Parsons, poets, fiction-writers,  
Pilferers of noble thought,  
Found a band of unseen smiters  
Made their glory one vast blot !  
Here old wrongs were strangely righted,  
There some villainy unwound,  
Men were freed whose names were blighted,  
And 'mid dross was honour found.  
Dumb we watched the hours unfold,  
Who were plated, who were gold.

Drunkards' children wailed their story,  
 Asked the nation,—“Where her thongs?”  
 Blood-stained gold was dear-bought glory,  
 Won from all their cruel wrongs!  
 Right from earth was almost routed,  
 Nought was real but deceit,  
 Till our own poor selves we doubted  
 Whether just or reprobate;  
 All were wretched—sage and clown—  
 In this world turned upside down.

THIRD PERSON (*The Laws of Nature*).

One morn we woke and stood amazed,  
 The sun rose in the west,  
 And light played cantrips with our eyes,  
 And fires us fitful blest.  
 Attraction's laws nigh lost their power,  
 Scarce weight was left to stone,  
 A man might fall a thousand feet,  
 And never break a bone.  
 The walls fell crumbling into dust,  
 And masons stood dead beat,  
 While labour's crown of yesterday,  
 A wreck lay at their feet.  
 A gentle wind made us lay hold  
 Of aught in our alarm,  
 And oft through air a man was whirled,  
 A lamp-post 'neath his arm.


All things were now as clear as glass,<sup>2</sup>  
 And home's sweet charm was dead,  
 The prying eye all secrets knew,  
 And thieves where gold was hid.  
 The prison bars refused their tasks,  
 Crime ruled with iron hand,  
 And judges swore their powers were dead,  
 Through all our stricken land.

No judgment fell on evil lives,  
Uprightness had no gain ;  
The sick were conscious of no ills,  
The healthy groaned with pain.  
Now right and wrong as twins were clad,  
And men forgot each other,  
And priest and lawyer would salute  
A swindler as their brother.

The weather-clerk reversed his rules,  
For "fair," the cove gave, "wet" ;  
To summer, winter, rain and heat,  
No measured time he set,  
The broken ice sank in the stream,  
The fishes all were killed,  
And boiling water gave no steam,  
Nor fountains cisterns filled.  
The air its numbered parts forgot,  
Confusion reigned instead,  
Here laughing-gas made people mad,  
There carbo' reaped his dead.

The crawling world found poison fangs,  
Tame beasts with blood-thirst burned,  
And flies and gnats had hornets' stings,  
And vicious on men turned.  
Each spike of grass as nettle stung,  
All bushes thorns displayed,  
And every plant as hemlock smelled,  
In death all flowers were laid.  
Our outer skin at touch was fire,  
Our clothes bred agony,  
And men with knit teeth cursed their lot  
With one despairing cry.

The landscape lost its tints and shades,  
The sky hung leaden grey,  
The woodland choirs' glad songs were changed,  
To one eternal bray.



No glories from the organ pealed,  
 The painters' art had fled,  
 For senses, once an endless joy,  
 Now tortures gave instead.

The toiler and the idler found  
 The same reward at last,  
 Till labour hurled its tools away,  
 And swore its spurs were past.  
 No harvests now would crown the year,  
 The former things had fled,  
 And lawlessness was nature's law,  
 Cause and effect were dead.  
 The rich and poor had equal grown,  
 All shipwrecked in the strife,  
 Gold had no worth and toil was vain,  
 A piece of bread was life !

'Twas old year's eve and ruin reigned,  
 The sun set in the east,  
 And hopeless man prayed that the dawn  
 Would wake him up a beast !  
 We'd God arraigned, condemned His plan  
 Blind here . . . dumb there . . . all wrong !  
 His ways reversed would wisdom crown,  
 And give our lives a song.  
 We'd had our wish ! Our blatant cry  
 As iron pierced our soul ;  
 We saw His care was ever true  
 As needle to the pole.  
 The day-break dawned just as of old,  
 And fled the dreadful jar,  
 And men bowed down with grateful hearts,  
 And blest things as they are !

#### NOTES.

1. British Medical Schools are happily free from the charge of *wanton experiments* which disgrace some Universities abroad.
2. This poem was written before the discovery of the *Röntgen Rays*.

## BOB HUNTER'S PRAYER.

DON'T know Bob Hunter's prayer, eh?  
Wal'! it's an eddication;  
I kinder think it better  
Than boastin' o' salvation.  
Tom Mike took bad. His Meetin'  
They calls the Methody,—  
That's some old Latin gammon,  
Too dictionair for me.

Owd Pillbox, he talked little,  
" 'Peared hopeless like," he said;  
Six mouths to feed an' Tom, sir,  
Eaten' his heart a-bed.  
His "brethren" held a meetin'  
To skeer from rocks a-head,  
Them things is good, I knows it,  
But young uns must be fed.

When cripple Jones was spoutin'—  
I aint slick at their lingo,  
I'm better up to barkers,  
An' poundin' heads, by jingo!—  
Then, bang! the door flew open,  
In stalked Bob's eldest son,  
An' there he stood a-grinnin',  
Till Jones his yarn had spun.

"Dad's busy," cried the youngster,  
Wi' summat like a roar,  
"He's sent his prayer, you'll find it  
A-waitin' at the door!"  
There men saw, misty-eyed, sir,  
Their hearts wi' big thumps beatin',  
Potatoes, hams, eggs, butter—  
A blazin' power o' eatin'!

Men puffed beneath the hampers,—  
 A kind o' rough Amen !  
 The women folk—God bless them !  
 Were wellin' out their rain.  
 I guess, in Heaven a-crowdin',  
 The Father loves to see,  
 Was round the Angel pennin'  
 "Ye did it unto Me !"

THE CLOSE OF A LECTURE ON  
*READING.*

\* \* \* \* \*

OUR sages know—high priests of thought,—  
 Who pierce to the divine,  
 And gaze upon the soul of things,  
 And drink heaven's new-made wine ;  
 Wait at their feet, catch up their song,  
 And sing it as you march along.

Live in the order, fitness, law,  
 The beauty everywhere,  
 And know thyself a breath divine,  
 Life's everlasting heir ;  
 For what now crowns the monarch man,  
 Lived in our God ere things began.

Trace growing thought—its ebbs and flows,  
 From fountains far away—  
 See sowings in time's hoary eld,  
 Our hands now reap to-day,  
 As when some wild, man, toiling, clears,  
 Long buried flower-life reappears.

Catch from the leaders of the race  
 Some of their quickening fire,

And shake thy torch until its flame  
 Shall other breasts inspire !  
 That life is lost, howe'er 'tis spent,  
 That suns not all around,  
 Nor lives in man a deathless seed,  
 To bless some barren ground ;  
 For life alone can birth the new,  
 Then live the *On !* that lives in you.

The patriot my praise commands,  
 The wise my warm esteem,  
 But he who loves, and mercy shews,  
 Alone my heart can claim ;  
 His life proclaims in man's dull ear,  
 Heaven's flowers can bloom on earth's cold sphere.

Live in high aims ; there fuse thy soul,  
 Bid weeds to flowerets grow,  
 Leave beacon-lights along thy path  
 To cheer the faint and slow,  
 Greet with thy might each rising sun  
 And eve to morn will shout, " Well done ! "

### THE MARRIED MAN'S LAMENT.

(A PARODY.)

O WHY was I beguiled, why did I take the leap ?  
 O why left I the band where nane are seen to weep ?  
 I sigh for what I was an' the saut tear fills my e'e,  
 But I canna get a blink o' my lost liberty.

Hope's mornin' dreams were high, they rase on  
 gowden wings,  
 They sang o' Eden bowers an' a' love's rapture brings,  
 But noo I see the broom wi' vengeance at me flee,  
 An' hear yon limmer's tongue aye mock my misery.

O here nae laverock's voice awakes the ruddy morn,  
Nor sangs o' mirth are heard amang the yellow corn.  
Day spreads his blissfu' sheen, night rests the weary e'e,  
But leave me wi' my "thorn," an' my lost liberty.

There's a hope for every wae, an' a balm for every pain,  
But the married seek for rest an' find the search in  
vain,  
There's a track across the deep and a path across  
the sea,  
But the married's sold an' done to woman's slavery.

### AFTER PASSING THROUGH SOME OF THE SLUMS OF LONDON.

AWAKE, ye rich ! What of your trust ?  
You steward but a share  
Of God's vast heritage for man ;  
How stands your record there ?  
Wealth floods these streets. Your brother stands  
Pale, hungering at your gates ;  
He bears your task straight from the throne,  
And for your answer waits.  
His rags, his years, his haggard face,  
His tears which silent flow,  
In strong, dumb speech aloud proclaim  
His unguessed depths of woe.

You own and have not ; use and find  
Your pleasure fruit in pain ;  
Befooled, ye weigh in unjust scales  
Where lies your noblest gain ;  
For you *possess* but what your hands  
In brother-love have sown,  
The law of man's true happiness  
Is mirrored in God's own.



Go, join those faithful bands who toil  
 To ease the seething woe,  
 And let your gold with thoughtful care  
 In one full blessing flow !  
 Wait not for light. Light waits to lead,  
 Go where grief's foot has trod,  
 And be co-heir of that wide love  
 That fills the breast of God.

Their homes are desolate ; their hearts  
 More desolated still ;  
 Christ pleads in them ; their hands His hands,  
 His empty bosom fill !  
 Give with a love that speaks thy love,  
 As God has given to thee ;  
 And *judge not* as He has not judged  
 In His lib'rality.  
 Their strength was thine in life's rich prime,  
 But now in eve's decay,  
 You throw the worn-out tool aside,  
 As rags are thrown away.  
 You scorning ask, " Who are these men,  
 And what their claim on me ? "  
 I cannot tell, for time's too short,  
 But ask at Calvary !

Despair is strong. Its iron hand  
 Mocks order's lawful chain ;  
 And want sows fiery seeds of hate,  
 With ruin in its train.  
 The great Unfed we may forget,  
 Or spurn them as a clod,  
 Their cry unheard leaps to the throne,  
 And finds the ear of God !  
 As storm-lashed seas for ever grind  
 The helpless, guiltless shore,  
 So want with rebel hand may beat  
 Fierce at our children's door.

That day avert ! Turn foe to friend,  
And join, while time is given,  
The glorious priesthood of the good—  
The senior peers of heaven !

Rise then each soldier of the Cross,  
The church redeemed thee waits ;  
And angels crowd heaven's bastioned walls,  
And Christ throws wide the gates,  
That from the battlefield of love  
In its triumphant sway,  
The ransomed throngs may enter in,  
Then, forward ! share that day !

### THE FAIRY'S BRIDAL.

SUGGESTED BY THE FAIRY RINGS IN THE HIGH  
BRAES PARK, HOPETOUN.

BENEATH a hawthorn's may-clad shade  
A mossy green bank slept,  
Where sly to kiss the drowsy flowers,  
The silvery moonbeams crept ;  
There trooping came a fairy band,  
Like flakes of gold and green,  
With heath-bell cups to gather dew,  
To bathe their happy queen.

The butterflies had lent them wings,  
Star circlets crowned each head,  
Their eyes shed light, their footsteps fell  
Soft as a snowflake's tread.  
O tiny were these merry elves,  
And sweet each little face ;  
Their gauzy robes scarce hid their forms  
Of more than mortal grace.

They climbed the daisies' slender stems  
That starred their leafy bower,  
And laughing filled their swaying thrones—  
A flower within a flower.  
Then one tall sylph—three inches most—  
Cried, "Listen, sisters dear,  
I'll tell of Moonbeam's bridal day  
While resting we sit here.

"O she was born for joy and love,  
All charms around her played  
With laughing eyes, and rosebud lips  
Just for sweet kisses made.  
She won the heart of Summer Sheen,  
That gallant knight and true,  
And our good queen said, 'Speed the day  
When one shall spring from two.'

"The eve before the happy day  
We busy fingers plied,  
And glow-worms flamed a thousand lamps  
In honour of our bride.  
Full many a flower we robbed that night  
Of some bright tinted leaf,  
And gard'ners scratched their puzzled pates  
And wondered who was thief!  
'Mid jest and song we stitched these gems  
With hair from fair maid's tresses,  
Till tiny rainbows floated round  
All glowing in our dresses.

"My robes were made of golden cloth  
Wove by the setting sun,  
My veil a stripe of silvery mist  
From 'merry dancers' won.  
A feather plucked from lapwing's crest  
Thrice circled round my waist,  
A bloom of sweet forget-me-not  
As crown my proud head graced.

“But Moonbeam gave her simple choice,  
For skirt a snowdrop's bell,  
A spider's web with pearls, like dew,  
Around her flowing fell.  
Her raven hair in gems we set,  
Gleaned from deep seas afar,  
And looped them round with silver rays  
Stolen from the evening star.  
We found a sunbeam fast asleep—  
A blushing rose its bed—  
That golden thread a crown we made  
To grace her noble head.

“Then dawned the day at whose glad close  
This queen of love and light  
Was, 'mid the swell of Elfland joy,  
To wed her brave true knight.  
I nestled all the drowsy noon  
Among some mignonette,  
Its scent me 'Little Darling' won—  
A name I treasure yet.  
O lazily the tyrant sun—  
His feet, that day, was lead—  
Crept to the west, drew round his clouds  
And scrambled into bed.

“I hate the sun ! He mocks our tears,  
His rays pollute our home ;  
Were he but dead, or just stone blind,  
How grandly we should roam !  
O'er hill and dale we'd course and bound  
Astride the moon's soft beams,  
And play our pranks in hut and hall  
Beyond our wildest dreams.

“When tired with mirth and gleesome sport,  
And freaks of countless number,

“ We'd nestle in some lily fair  
While winds rocked us to slumber ;  
When rested, wake from perfumed sleep,  
Wash in a drop of dew,  
Sip honey from the woodbine's cup,  
And all our joys renew.  
But that, my loves, will never be,  
Cross threads to all are spun,  
Man has his cares—more made than sent,  
And we've that glaring sun !

“ Then wandering night slew fainting day,  
And stars thronged all the skies,  
And watched us—envious of our mirth—  
With wistful, hungering eyes.  
'Neath this old tree the greenwood folk—  
The fairest of the fair—  
And belted knight with helm and plume,  
Came our grand joys to share.  
Two drops of water fresh and pure  
Each from a different rill  
Lay sparkling on two lily leaves  
Waiting our High Priest's will.  
He gave one leaf to Summer Sheen,  
And one to Moonbeam dear,  
'Now in this acorn cup,' he said,  
'Each drop your drop with care ;'  
''Tis done,' he cried, 'Proud wedlock's sign,  
They twain—a married pair ;  
And such for aye, till hand restore  
These drops as once they were.'

“ With what a shout we rent the air,  
'Twas heard three ells and more,  
And woke the bees from out their dreams  
Of flowers and honeyed store.  
Then hand in hand we tripped the dance,  
And sang right merrilie,

'Come, gallant knights, essay the task,  
And Moonbeam thine shall be !'  
The bell-shaped flowers rang merry peals,  
Woodbine perfumed the air,  
And crickets piped their newest song,  
And joy filled everywhere.  
Our warriors rode on butterflies,  
And some, grasshoppers wild,  
And raced and chased each other there,  
As happy child with child.

"Then in our midst fierce Sombra dashed,  
Dark night sat on his brow ;  
As early frost on autumn flowers  
We felt his presence now.  
He rode a spider large and wild,  
We shuddering fled the sight,  
And hid beneath a mushroom coop,  
Half dead with sickening fright.  
Two beetle sheaths, won in his wars,  
Made up his coat of mail ;  
His sounding shield of silver sheen,  
A mighty salmon's scale.  
And stern aloft his spear he bore—  
A hornet's dreadful sting—  
And ever as he struck his shield,  
Made all its bosses ring.

" 'I claim fair Moonbeam,' stern he cried,  
'And he who dares say—"nay,"  
My warrior sword will bid him swift  
In thin air melt away !  
We played "bo-peep" in lily cups,  
I wreathed her brow with flowers,  
And in her slumbers wove her dreams,  
In our young golden hours.  
We plighted troth—the greenwoods know !  
Our cup ran o'er with bliss

And sealed, beneath the winking stars,  
Our vows with many a kiss.'

"Then our brave priest with words of fire  
Called Sombra base, untrue,  
His promises, a shadow-bond,  
His love, as morning dew.  
Dark Sombra's face grew black with wrath,  
He gave one vengeful cry,  
'No other then shall call thee wife,  
For, Moonbeam, thou shalt die !'  
A rush—a flash—a wild spear-thrust  
Laid our fair rosebud low  
Amid the daisies, cold and white,  
Like flake of new-fallen snow !

"O many a tear we wailing shed,  
As in a lily leaf  
We shrouded up our sister dear,  
'Mid words of tender grief.  
And 'neath this hawthorn tree she lies ;  
O well I know the spot !  
Tread lightly near where lowly blooms  
That sweet forget-me-not !

"A wanderer o'er wide, wide earth,  
Dark Sombra's doomed to roam ;  
A broken knight, the prey of fear,  
Without a friend or home."

## AFTER AN ORGAN RECITAL IN PEEBLES PARISH CHURCH.

CONDUCTED BY J. J. FINLAY, ESQ.

O MUSIC ! wandering voice from heaven  
Soft whispered to the soul ;  
A foretaste of those realms all fair  
That crown life's further goal ;

As when through night we joyous hear  
Some well-known voice is drawing near.

It swells, it rolls in gathering might,  
A billowy storm of sound,  
The trembling air throbs 'neath its sway,  
It shakes the listening ground ;  
As if it would proclaim to earth  
A new-born joy—an angel's birth ;  
Or bid us dream of welcomes given,  
To martyr-spirits entering heaven.

Then soft it lures the troubled breast  
From earth's corroding care,  
And wins forgetfulness of toil,  
And mammon's gilded snare ;  
We touch new worlds, tread purer plains,  
And heaven is nearer through the strains ;  
To every thought it lends its voice,  
And angels listen and rejoice.

O poor dumb mute ! my prisoned soul  
Beats 'gainst her bars and longs  
To catch the message in thy voice,  
Unreached by poet's songs ;  
For 'mid thy tide's proud rise and fall,  
My deeper nature cries—" Not all ? "

But when this infant life is past,  
And its true manhood found,  
Then face to face with all *His* works,  
We'll reach the Soul of sound,  
And learn her tale—her mission here,  
To soothe our griefs and wing our prayer.



# LETTER TO W. M——L, ESQ. LATE OF CUPAR FIFE.

ANCE mair my rhymin' thoughts tak' wing,  
 An' hamely truths I'll sough an' sing,  
     As I may see the licht ;  
 Aiblins some note your hairt may hear,  
 To build a hope or drown a fear,  
     In your young openin' fecht ;  
 For mony a weary dunt an' clour  
     We're weirded aft to dree ;  
 Till gaspin' braithless 'mang the stour,  
     We craven whisper—flee !  
 But honour tint is manhood's shame,  
     Then let us front our faes ;  
 For Scotland's name an' Scotland's fame,  
     We'll waur to win oor bays.  
     The darin' unsparin'  
         Wi' strokes the fae appals ;  
     While earth cries as time flies,  
         "The coward only falls."

The peers o' sang I see afar  
 (Each in his glory as a star  
     Gemmin' the brow o' nicht),  
 Standin' alane 'mid wintry skies,  
 Their burnin' thoughts, their sacrifice,  
     To aid the true and richt.  
 Their fingers touch some gowden chord,  
     Unreached and dumb before ;  
 Create a thought—a deathless word—  
     That betters a' earth's store ;  
     Their teachin' aye reachin'  
     Oor hairts wi' quickenin' power,  
 Their pages the ages  
     Claim as a heavenly dower.

I own I'm wrang to waste your time  
Wi' feckless talk in jinglin' rhyme—  
O' makkar-craft nae trace—  
But friendship's bond will prompt you still  
To thole the rhymer's lack o' skill,  
An' fancy's flowin' grace.  
And as the dew its freshness gi'es  
To nature's thirstin' breast,  
Sae kindly deeds our bosoms please,  
An' mak' our friendships blest.  
I sacred haud that hallowed thrill,  
Pulsin' wi' life an' breath,  
That brunts a' change, nor flags until  
Ae hand is cauld in death.  
The man wha lives to bless the race  
By deed, or tongue or pen,  
Ay, heaven is his—Christ kens his place,  
And God will say, "Amen!"  
Let's rise then an' prize then  
This mair than angel's task;  
A story—a glory—  
Where's nobler, let me ask?

Let pity hae her heavenly place,  
For sorrow's sib to a' oor race,  
An' pleads for helpin' han's;  
The comforter nae headache kens,  
A gi'ein' han' the better fen's  
For God his banker stan's.  
Touch good—touch God! then let love flow;  
Christ walks our streets. His form  
In rags an' grime, in age an' woe,  
Calls for love's mighty arm.


\* \* \* \* \*

But reckless youth mak's ruefu' eld,  
An' waste pits oot the fire,

An' hangin' han's though e'er sae skilled  
Gi'e nought but rags for hire.  
Braw chances lie thick round oor door,  
Brimmin' wi' recompense,  
An' want o' cash the crowds deplore,  
But nane the want o' sense!  
Wut's lesson repressin'  
Blind whar' the ba' may row,  
Nor mindin' the endin'  
Hangs on their use o'—*Now!*

Bind to your soul a little throng  
Whose gratefu' lives will be your song,  
An' sunshine on your way;  
An' they, like you, the earth will bless,  
For love aye lives to mak' wae less,  
An' brighter mak' each day.  
Fause frien's may smite wi' siccar steel,  
An' fate, wi' iron nieve,  
But joy frae guid, the grim auld deil  
Will fail that bliss to rieve!  
You weaken him whom you forgive,  
An' stronger grows your hand,  
Store up sic deeds, your joy they'll prove  
On yon bright sunny land!  
Nae rust there to dust there  
Can bring your "laid up" gains,  
Your treasure's full measure  
Will balance a' your pains.

An' when the siren, Pleasure, sings,  
To your swift feet lend eagle wings;  
To listen is a crime;  
Fell scorpions' stings are in her whup,  
An' shame an' death lurk in her cup,  
An' Satan bides his time.  
An' O! a hairt at war wi' sel',  
An' sin demandin' pay,



Will need nae ither browst o' ill  
 To brim its cup o' wae !  
 But *heed well* will speed well,  
 An' keep frae many a fa',  
 An' ward you an' guard you  
 In playin' life's fit-ba'.

- An' you, desk-bund, 'mang lawyers' bills,  
 An' quirks, an' shams, an' crazy wills,  
 Maun plod the hale day lang,  
 Wi' scarce a blink to ca' your ain,  
 To rest your weary, fagged-out brain,  
 Or croon yoursel' a sang.  
 But ply your pen, and conscience drap !  
 It suits na your profession,  
 An' time may when I'll doff my cap  
 To you, a Lord o' Session,  
 Though great then in state then  
 Wi' grandeur's awfu' plaster,  
 You'll fail na to hail me  
 Your humble frien'—"the Master."

But wae's o' me ! You've changed your nes',  
 An' sae maun I your late address,  
 The new looks queer to me ;  
 For Hossack ! Sic an awfu' name,  
 Might kinship wi' the Cossack claim,  
 O' Don or Pontus sea.  
 An' Nancy's lost that blithesome bird  
 That made her hame sae cheerie,  
 An' noo her beil's without a word  
 To break the silence dreary.  
 Puir Nancy, I fancy,  
 Will miss her laddie sair ;  
 But hark you an' mark you  
 He'll miss his auntie mair ;

For weel I ken the stranger's han'  
 May gie in fu' what you comman',  
     An' smile wi' business measure ;  
 But in the cot where friendship dwells  
 Wi' a' its sweet endurin' spells,  
     There, *there's* alane life's treasure !  
 A something lures the weary soul  
     That tongue can never name,  
 Love's restin' place—her Capitol,  
     Her ain, her cherished hame.  
     'Mid movin's an' rovin's  
     Frae east to sunny west,  
     We mind then an' find then,  
     That spot, though pair's the best !

An' noo to windin' up my ditty,  
 If there's offence, sae mair a pity,  
     An' a' my labour vain ;  
 For be it e'er sae lame an' poor  
 It's cost me scribblin' hour on hour,  
     An' rummagin' o' brain.  
 My benisons an' love ! Guid night !  
     May Providence thee shield,  
 An' round thy footsteps shed a light  
     Frae mercy's throne revealed ;  
     That onward an' forward  
     The path o' duty pressed,  
     Will own thee, an' crown thee,  
     Wi' heaven's grand active rest.

### THE YOUTH AND THE VOICE.

(SUGGESTED BY AN ANECDOTE TOLD BY THE LATE  
 REV. T. S. GOLDIE, COLDSTREAM.)

“UP!” cried a youth, “now for the race,  
 I hear life's rousing call,  
 Hope flings her banner to the breeze,  
 And courage fires my soul ;

No idle hours my hands shall know,  
And lofty zeal through all shall flow ;”  
Then on his ear, baffling his ken,  
Fell these strange words—“What then, what  
then?”

“I’ll win my masters’ proud esteem,  
Their interest count my own,  
And larger gains will crown my care,  
Their harvests—What I’ve sown ;  
From branch to branch I’ll climb the tree,  
Till in the *Firm* my name shall be.”  
But softly came the words again,  
“This height attained, What then, what then?”

“I see a maiden good and fair,  
No sweeter flower on earth,  
She is my goal—not for her gold,  
But for her own dear worth.  
No ! my right hand my home shall build,  
Love, truth and toil my sword and shield ;  
Then fell the voice not free from pain,  
“Her wooed and won, What then, what then?”

“Her mine ! To trade my life I’ll give,  
A home worth her I’ll rear,  
If children bless my sun-clad bower,  
We’ll hold these love-links dear,  
And for them live with high intent,  
Glad in these sacred treasures sent.”  
Once more the voice in solemn strain,  
“These hopes attained, What then, what  
then?”

“Proud in my gains ere day declines  
I’ll win some sweet retreat,  
Where rod and gun and trim-rigged bark  
My leisure hours will greet ;

While round my hearth friends quaff the bowl  
 To rouse their blood and glad their soul."  
 Then sternly fell the dark refrain,  
 "When these are past, What then, what  
 then?"

"O . . . well, . . . then! . . . Yes, then I  
 must face  
 The Reaper of the past;  
 No bribe can buy a short reprieve,  
 He gathers all at last.  
 'Tis sad! the grave . . . cold . . . silent . . .  
 lone,  
 Your only voice a lying stone!"  
 Then thundering fell that voice again,  
 "When death's flood's passed, What then,  
 what then?"

### ON SEEING SOME PLOUGHMEN BREAK UP A FALLOW FIELD.

SEE, the waiting ground is broken,  
 Work and faith join loving hands,  
 Trusting in the old word spoken—  
 "Spring and summer" to all lands.  
 On! my brothers, great's your mission;  
 Write your names on well-ploughed field,  
 God will read them, bid fruition  
 Her "Amen" in harvests yield.

God and man, O matchless story!  
 Through the hours each to his part,  
 Till the fields in golden glory  
 Win a song from every heart.  
 Stern the fields our caste-pride level,  
 Common wants cry "common fate,"  
 Sons of wisdom, sons of revel,  
 On earth's bounty helpless wait.

And the mind, woke from her slumbers,  
Enters on her higher birth,  
Weighs the stars, their footsteps numbers,  
And enchains the powers of earth.  
Every triumph has her presage  
Of some dim, mist-visioned gate,  
And her voice rings with this message,  
"Nobler crowns still on thee wait !"

All of God is not yet spoken,  
Stray notes, throbbing, float around,  
Their own light the glorious token,  
Where their natal spot is found.  
In those thoughts that men call dreaming,  
Rising earth makes heaven draw nearer,  
And our love, with new force teeming,  
Finds our trusting truer, dearer.

Catch the hope-call, "day is breaking !"  
Up and share each new-born light,  
Help times "*Onwards !*" thy post taking,  
Ere sinks down the barren night ;  
Seeing through the coming ages,  
Earth from good to better grown,  
Till God writes on time's last pages,  
"Linked at last back to my throne !"

## PHILOSOPHY COMFORTLESS.

PHILOSOPHY comfortless, cold,  
Gives conscience a voice of despair,  
And drives me play coward, or bold,  
Teeth-clenched, all death's terrors to dare.  
Its voice has no teaching to guide,  
Earth numbers her sons as her slaves,  
And death reaps the race in his pride,  
And paves all his household with graves.



The sages who voice all the past,  
But flags of distress shew to man,  
Their teachings but stumblings at best,  
And hold not the key to life's plan.  
Their noblest but tell of a night  
Unblest with the hope of a dawn,  
They march with no weapons for fight  
And, baffled, expire with a groan.

Life loses her voices of hope,  
The soul of her loveliness dies,  
Our *onwards*—a stagger—a grope,  
Uncheered by a star in our skies.  
Our curses, our prayers beat the air,  
As crushed o'er our dead ones we bend,  
Asking why affections e'er were,  
Since sages and brutes have one end ?

Life's darkness me gathers around,  
And reason is baffled to aid ;  
No guide o'er the treacherous ground,  
No captain the timid to lead ;  
Without either steersman or chart  
My soul o'er life's wild billows toss,  
Till love from the dear Father's heart  
Leads me to the foot of the Cross.

There trial takes garb of a friend,  
The outcast I feel are my care ;  
And death—a short night at the end,  
That lies 'tween the here and the there .  
Though rough and untrodden the road,  
My weakness in strength melts away,  
And my soul in the freedom of God,  
Braces up, marches on in the day.

## THE SAGA OF DU VANO.

HEAR the Saga of Du Vano,  
Builder of the three creations,  
Halls of Shells, green Earth and Abred.  
As the seed from hand of sower,  
He on airy nothing scattered  
Cloud-dust of his quickening brightness ;  
Height on height he-reared unending,  
Depth on depth in night descending,  
On the heavens great showers of glory,  
Milky ways and belts of darkness ;  
Sun and moon and baneful comets,  
Rose his servants at his bidding ;  
While the earth responsive answered  
To his call and lofty purpose,  
Into *fact* in grandeur rearing  
All his thoughts of might and goodness.

Then creation poured her homage !  
Of her children none were silent ;  
Sun and moon and starry armies,  
Rolling seas and virgin forests,  
Moors and fells and snow-clad mountains—  
All adored the great Du Vano ;  
And he, listening, heard their thunders  
Like the roar of thousand waters ;  
And the primrose in the valley  
Knew her lisps pleased her maker.

On a throne of plaited rainbows  
Sat he clothed in woven sunlight,  
Evening sky-drift curtained o'er him ;  
Round his brow a wreath of lightning  
As a garland on a maiden.  
Then his voice like falls of Corra,  
Or the roll of distant thunder,  
Bade the lesser gods attend him,  
Each to have his post assigned him ;

For a god whose hands were idle  
Was already half a demon.  
*Ner* had ocean for his homestead,  
And the mermaids for his playthings ;  
*Baal*, day, the sun for chariot,  
And all fires his flaming servants ;  
*Re*, his queen, the peaceful evening,  
And the moon and stars for maidens ;  
*Balor* heired the moors and fenlands,  
Bogs and quags and dread morasses ;  
But he frowned and darkly brooded  
O'er his post among the rulers,  
All-forgetting that a duty  
Has its honour from the doer  
Who can make the meanest greatest.

From the Halls of Shells departing  
Balor sought the wilds of Rannoch,  
And the swamps of rainy Erin,  
For their loneliness, desolation,  
With his troubled spirit blended.  
To the winds he told his sorrow,  
But they drowned his wail with laughter,  
Tossed his words (like leaves of autumn  
When the trees throw off their garments),  
As a plaything for their sporting,  
Worn and worthless—god-unworthy !  
Then he learned the might of silence,  
And in secret nursed his anger.

On his throne Du Vano pondered ;  
What was lurking for his offspring  
In the dark and voiceless future ?  
For his works he called his children,  
He had cared in love to make them,  
Loved them strangely when they were not.  
But the restless All-Source brooded,  
For his heart was lone and empty.  
What he longed for still he knew not.  
As a dream but half remembered,

So his *want* his thought eluded.  
He was baffled, and he shuddered !  
Was he, like his creatures, fated—  
Held in sway by powers beyond him ?  
Would he, in some far-off future,  
Sink in trembling, rayless dotage ;  
Be by stronger gods unseated,  
And by grinning demons pitied ;  
And his children hail the comers,  
And forget their great creator ?  
Thus he pondered, feared, and shuddered.  
But the air was full of gladness ;  
Nature, grateful, lowly worshipped !  
It might have its rains and tempests,  
Fruitless summers, snowy winters,  
But it clothed itself in gladness,  
All its thoughts wrapped in the present ;  
In its guileless joy it knew not  
Of the sorrows of its maker,  
As a child plays round the coffin  
Of its loving silent father.

Then on wings of morn descending,  
On the mount of God he landed—  
Proud Ben Ledi—where our kinsmen  
Bind their gifts upon the altar.  
Down its slopes he slowly wended  
To the lake, whose silent waters  
Seemed a bit of broken heaven,  
In the quiet valley resting.  
Lubnaig calmed her restless features,  
Bade away her wavy wrinkles,  
At his feet she gently nestled,  
As an infant trusts its mother ;  
While the heath-bell and the alder,  
Quivering birch and drooping willow,  
And the mountain torrents whispered,  
“ ’Tis our Maker, great Du Vano ! ”  
And in silence reverent listened.

As he gazed he saw his shadow  
Deep down in the water resting ;  
Line for line his form reflecting,  
Cloudy garments, lightning circlet,  
Rainbow-girdle, and its tassels  
Bunches of the morning glory—  
All were there in deeper softness,  
As the features of a father  
Fairer rise in lovely daughter.  
Then he smiled, and upward smiling  
Gazed the image in its beauty.  
Swift his dark eye caught a gladness,  
Like a flash of noon-day sunlight,  
While his words thus broke the silence,  
“ Now I’ve found my heart’s deep cravings !  
All earth’s treasures are but nothings,  
Scarce they know me ; but a father  
Must have honour, trust, affection  
Answering back his unsought goodness,  
With a flood of child endearings.  
*Mine* I’ll make this airy phantom !  
From the still and crystal waters  
I will take it and endow it  
With a mind my thoughts receiving,  
And a spirit born for ruling.  
Come then out, thou airy vision,  
As a sunbeam silent sleeping  
In those waters dark, unheeded.”  
Strong his hand sought to the waters  
To redeem from prison fetters,  
This fair creature of the sunlight.  
Then a shadow-hand uprising,  
As if pleading, as if praying,  
Met the god-hand down descending.  
Then Du Vano, will exerting,  
Sent his spirit through the waters,  
And, upraising, on the shingle  
Placed he Conar, his own image,

Of our race the first-begotten.  
Thus the Life-King moulded Conar,  
Sire of kings and serfs and heroes,  
Priests and seers—his countless children—  
Made him lord of land and water,  
And with loving lips he kissed him,  
Every blessing richly giving.

Leaving Lubnaig's silvery waters,  
Cradle of our far-off father,  
Sweet Du Vach, earth's loving mother,  
In some act of goodness busied,  
Saw Du Vano, her dear husband,  
And the kingly new-born Conar,  
Learned the secret of his being ;  
Then her breast was filled with dreamings,  
For her heart was truer, deeper—  
Knowing as a wife and mother,  
What Du Vano ne'er could fathom.

To the lake she, pondering, hurried,  
In its bosom saw her shadow,  
Winsome, lithesome, proud and queenly,  
Grace and beauty richly blending,  
With rose lips just made for kissing,  
And a smile to baffle sorrow.  
Then the goddess more than whispered,  
" In Du Vano's name I call thee,  
Come thou forth, forsake the waters ! "  
As the flowers respond to spring-time  
And the birds the call of morning,  
So the vision Du Vach answered,  
Hand to hand responsive raising.  
Thus sprung Hona—first of women—  
And her offspring call her mother,  
Man's best solace and true helper !  
Proud the joy was at their meeting,  
God and goddess thrilled with pleasure,  
For they'd learned a new-born blessing,  
Giving's better than receiving.

They saw Conar glow with rapture,  
Feel a longing, thrilling, pulsing,  
All impatient to be spoken !  
Earth was banished ; god and goddess  
Were a poor, unwelcome presence ;  
Hona filled his soul with wonder,  
Rapture, fire, a nameless something,  
Were she his, she might explain it.  
Hona's blushes sweet " Yes " answered,  
As a rock throws back an echo.  
Evening saw them wife and husband  
In the presence of Du Vano,  
With the world their roomy dwelling.

#### PART SECOND.

OFt we watch some opening rosebud,  
Here and there its glory hinting ;  
Now the soft winds round it gambol,  
Wanton sunbeams madly woo it,  
And the loving dew-drops kiss it,  
But it drooping pines and withers,  
For a worm its heart is gnawing ;  
So the years showed great Du Vano,  
Man was feeble and imperfect !  
Balor saw this, and in malice,  
Sought to wound the great All-father  
Through this last-born son of heaven.  
Then he whispered to our fore-sires :—  
" Why has man but earth to tread on,  
Why not wings to match the eagles,  
Speed of foot to down the red-deer,  
Strength to grapple bear or bison,  
Power to cross the briny ocean,  
Safe to tread its dark recesses,  
Making whales his finny coursers,  
Or turn serpents into play things,  
Be, in truth, earth's lord and master ? "

Poor, weak earth-worm—meanest crawler !  
Day gives labour, night rains terror,  
Summer, winter, snow, and tempest  
Hold him but a thing for sporting !  
Then man listened, yielded, drifted,  
As a boat with anchor broken !

Down the frowning Pass of Leny,  
Where the foaming waters struggle  
As a coil of hissing serpents,  
Writhing, twisting, wrestling, warring ;  
Now on rocks in triumph leaping,  
As fierce foemen tramp the vanquished ;  
Then a bed of tossing foam-drift,  
In wild swirls of baffled waters,  
Maddened by the goring rock-spears,  
Vano, soundless, unseen, wandered,  
(For he loved the world he'd fashioned,  
Loved it in the waking spring-time,  
Loved it in proud summer's glory,  
And the autumn bowed with gladness,  
With its burden of rich harvests ;  
Loved it in its winter sadness,  
Widowed of its sheen and music,  
Play-ground then of storm and tempest,  
And the Ice-King's snowy armies,  
Loved them all ; their countless voices  
Had one soul-note—Great Du Vano).  
Wandering there he, darkly brooding,  
Saw the frowning tempest gather,  
Saw the night her terrors marshal,  
Saw the roaring hell of waters  
In their struggle dark and endless,  
Heard the roll of distant thunder,  
As the groans of giants tortured ;  
Then he spoke, yet tender sadness  
In his words was breathing, throbbing,  
" I'll destroy man . . . let destruction  
Have his harvest, not one sparing——"



Then a shadow rose before him,  
Hideous, formless, cloud-wrapt, frowning,  
Locks as black as raven's feathers,  
Eyes, a pool of liquid midnight ;  
At its presence Leny trembled,  
And the girding walls of mountains  
Groaned unto the sobbing twilight !  
"Who art thou ?" cried pained Du Vano,  
For the father then felt terror  
As a warrior in the darkness,  
When some war-cry breaks the silence ;  
"Back, dark monster ! Where thy birth-land ?  
Stranger to my three-fold kingdom,  
Answer, or my quenchless fury  
And the chains of Abred wait thee !  
"Father," cried the baleful shadow,  
"Am I not thy last begotten ?  
Can a thought of thine e'er perish ?  
Till thou fall as leaves in autumn,  
And earth mourns for one who is not,  
Not till then can purpose fail thee !  
Thou hast willed man to destruction,  
I'm that *Will* ! here formed, yet formless,  
Something, nothing, yet that purpose  
Hold I in my endless keeping.  
As an acorn holds a forest,  
Waiting but the years and sunshine,  
So this Conar cradles nations  
Which for me are future harvests !"  
Then, Du Vano :—"Half my purpose  
Was unspoken. Not destruction,  
As a star wiped from the heavens,  
But to break man to *renew* him  
As the winter grows to summer.  
Go, then, Will, but as my servant,  
Take man's garment—his frail body,  
Give it back to earth's cold bosom,  
But as mine I hold his spirit,

'Tis my life-pulse in him throbbing,  
And I bid my servants trace thee,  
To lead home each soul untented—  
Set adrift into the darkness.  
True as heaven is bending o'er thee,  
And the earth is groaning round thee,  
And dark Abred frowns beneath thee,  
I shall claim it and renew it.  
Thus, O *Death*, for this I call thee,  
Thou art baffled, and my purpose  
Stands unaltered. Hear it, Shadow,  
Nay, I bind thee to my chariot,  
Make thee helper in man's *upwards*,  
To his future, grand completion.  
Seek the Night—thy swarthy sister,  
Fair and comely in thy presence—  
But a grave is thee awaiting ;  
Go and ponder ! I have said it !

NOTE.—The writer regrets he cannot recall the name of the country to which the foregoing Saga belongs. He has, therefore, given it a Druidic cast.

## TOM MORRIS.

WAL', mates, don't chalk low, Tom Morris,  
Till you knows the honest chap,  
Then you'll chuck yer keerless cheepin',  
An' in talkin' forge a gap.  
Wild the snow-bliz' swept down Broadway,  
New York had no open door,  
While cold, weary, hungry, homeless,  
Cowered her outcast, smitten poor !  
Darned, I'm cornered 'bout our church-life,  
Guess I'm not just orthodox ;  
Till our slums and lanes are bettered,  
As I tot it, all's a hoax !

Tom was hurryin' to 'is diggin's,  
Front 'im, a poor tramper crept ;  
"Beat, old work-mate," cried he kindly,  
Then the stranger turned an' wept.  
Guess, the bitin' cold nor'-easter  
Forced that tear, as on it swept,  
"More than beaten ; I am starvin'  
By the world an' God forgot ;"  
"Wrong there, stranger, for Tom Morris  
Ne'er saw want an' helped it not."

Home he took 'im, fed 'im, lodged 'im,  
Made a shake-down on the floor,  
Tucked 'im in, and said, "Our Father——"  
Tom had learned but little more.  
Mornin' came. The stranger, restless,  
Flushed an' fevered, could not eat ;  
"Stay you here, there's lots o' grubbin',  
And a drop—prime stuff, you bet."

Kinder think, 'tis no use tellin'  
All the six long weeks he watched ;  
How the strong man playin' woman,  
Oft to tears the sick man fetched.  
All the stranger had o' fixin's  
Was a Sapper's kind o' book ;  
Out o't, when Tom was a-workin'  
He a paintin' slowly took.

'Peared his bleedin' heart was in it,  
An' a tear slow tricklin' fell,  
"Yes, my high thought's there unfinished  
But that brave man . . . ! I must sell !"  
From Tom's quarters weakly crawlin',  
How he shivered in the snow ;  
But a dash o' sunshine cheered 'im,  
An' fate led him where to go.

Eve an' Tom came back together,  
Rest his heart an' hands had won ;  
Enterin' cheery—"Wal', how goes it ?  
Better? Ay, that's spry, well done !"  
Then the stranger, 'most a-chokin',  
Grateful down the sale-price laid,  
"Thirty dollars ; take them, master,  
And my debt is not half paid."

"No !" cried Morris, "that's not payment !  
'Pears it clinks o' barter stamp ;  
Pay me through some needy brother,  
Like yourself—a faintin' tramp !"  
That's Tom Morris ; mates, what think 'e ?  
Match him? Ay, them chaps is rare ;  
True each word, for I'm that stranger,  
And his goodness wins this tear.

### OUR CITY SLUMS.

RIFE in these dens around  
Sorrow and woe abound,  
And crimes dark pall ;  
No word of hopeful cheer,  
None their fell load to share,  
Left in their stern despair  
To brunt life's all !

Oaths fill the sickening air,  
Drink reigns a demon there ;  
A woman falls,  
Her helpless children weep,  
Crowd round the bleeding heap,  
Or from their brute-sire creep,  
Low round the walls.

Yet 'mid the dross, God knows,  
Some stream of life still flows  
    From founts deep hid ;  
For virtuous want oft here  
Will start the tender tear,  
And bid our hearts forbear  
    To count all dead !

Sadly the Sabbath bell  
Flings, like a passing knell,  
    Its call to prayer ;  
While loud our brother's cry  
Leaps to the throne on high  
In one fierce agony  
    And thunders there :—  
“ O God, on every side  
Want 'whelms with sweeping tide,  
    We pity crave !  
The well-clad hurry on,  
With ear and heart of stone  
They leave us lost, alone,  
    To tempt the grave.

“ Our children weep for bread,  
Our old 'O to be dead !'  
    Our young men curse  
And chafe 'gainst fate's dark wrong,  
See creeds—an empty song ;  
Their foes, the monied throng,  
    And vengeance nurse !

“ Our rags bar every door,  
Our crime is being poor ;  
    Our girls,—O God !  
Dark is their awful fate  
Sitting at shame's dread gate,  
Loathing their guilty bait,  
    Yet must—for food !”

Or, else in scorn he turns  
And cries while anger burns,  
    “Sirs, do you see  
The angel’s busy pen,  
Noting the groans of men  
From street, and slum and den,  
    Waiting for thee ?

“We hurl you back our hate,  
With knit teeth brunt our fate,  
    Till our last breath ;  
Your heaven ! Is’t worth a sneer,  
Your hell we do not fear,  
We bear its fellow here,  
    We welcome death !

“But when at last we meet  
Before the judgment seat,  
    Where all is known ;  
The judge on that great day,  
Though far we be astray,  
With pitying love may say,  
    ‘Close to my throne !’”

## WRITTEN ON A SPRING MORNING.

THERE’S sunshine in the valley,  
    Light’s basking on the hills,  
And waves of sunlit glory  
    Trip o’er the laughing rills.  
The breezes rouse the orchards,  
    From winter’s icy gloom,  
And from their waking branches  
    Shake leaves and snowy bloom.  
Glad flowers spread out their banners,  
    Love-songs thrill all the air,  
And joy ensouls the morning  
    With gladness everywhere.

God cares for this lost Eden,  
 Though peopling space with stars,  
 Weaves night and day for garments,  
 In black and golden bars.  
 His touch wakes earth's slow pulses,  
 His harvests call to reap,  
 Then angel-winter cometh  
 And lulls the earth to sleep.

Hope mounts on wings exulting,  
 Faith shouts, "Our God is true,"  
 Love whispers to the fearful,  
 "O child, He thinks on you."  
 From night, in angel vestments,  
 He leads the glad young day,  
 And gives the flowers their dew-drops,  
 And ye are more than they !

Now though my head is hoary,  
 Life's summer far away,  
 My soul drinks in the beauty  
 That's crowning all the day.  
 I know the hand that's led me  
 Through life's long checkered years,  
 Will fail not, though through weakness,  
 My eve may have its fears !  
 Then share, my soul, the gladness  
 Dear Love is showering round,  
 And on that might relying,  
 Let thy best joy be found.

THOUGHTS ON "THE PENITENTS'  
 WALK," ST MARY'S ABBEY, COLD-  
 STREAM.

'Tis holy ground ! Each spot is dear,  
 Ward of strong cries and sorrow's tear,

Each spot by bent knee pressed.  
Barefoot 'mid winter's snow,  
Or scorched 'neath summer's glow,  
The crushed in soul sought pardon, rest !

In vain Leet's ripples joyous fell,  
Whispering dear hope, and "all is well !"  
And kissed the daisied shore ;  
Or birds flung wanton round,  
A revel-flood of sound,  
Their music widened more  
The gulf that yawned their soul before !

Groping, unblest, 'mid penance-pain,  
As nets sweep barren seas in vain,  
They agonized for light ;  
But days crept to their close,  
And morns unsunned arose,  
And for their cry—a starless night !  
Unconscious wandering from the road  
Their priesthood taught and fathers trod,  
They cried in anguish wild,  
"O Father save thy child !"  
And erring (?), stumbled up to God ;  
Met Him in spite of creed,  
Found Him sweet Love indeed,  
While round, an angel throng  
Heard their deep groans burst into song !

## TRANSLATIONS—LATIN AND GREEK.

### TO SESTIUS.

(*Horace*, Lib. I. Ode iv.)

STERN winter flees the smile of spring,  
And voice of western breeze,  
And engines down dry vessels bring  
To their old native seas ;



No cattle joyful fill the byre,  
Nor swains sing round the blazing fire,  
While meads and lovers' bowers no more  
With feathery frost or snows are hoar.  
Now Venus leads with glad delight  
The dance to music's voice,  
And orbèd moons make gloomy night  
In silvery tones rejoice ;  
While comely graces gaily join,  
And laughing nymphs love-knots entwine,  
Shaking, as whirling round they go,  
The earth with swift alternate toe.

Now Vulcan's glowing anvils ring,  
And hard-tasked forges roar,  
Where swarthy Cyclops hammers swing,  
And sweat at every pore.  
'Tis ours to wreath the shining head,  
Where fragrant oil's been fondly shed,  
With myrtle or her sister-band  
New woke from out th' unfettered land ;  
And 'neath the veil of shady grove  
To Faunus let us bring  
A lamb or kid, should he approve,  
In grateful offering.

Pale Death, with swift impartial foot,  
His knock relentless brings  
To cottage door of lowly poor,  
And palaces of kings.  
O happy Sestius, my friend,  
This is the close—the fated end,  
For this poor life, our little span,  
Forbids a lengthened hope to man.

For soon thy form enwrapped by night,  
With fabled shades will roam  
Through wastes of air, a wandering sprite,  
In Pluto's shadowy home.

And then to *cast the lot* not thine  
For festive sovereignty of wine,  
Nor will Lycidas claim thy care  
For whom the maids are in despair.

## TO THALIARCHUS.

(*Horace*, Lib. I. Ode ix.)

SEE'ST thou how proud Soracte stands  
White with the deepening snow,  
And how the struggling woods complain  
Their wintry weight below ;  
And ice now chains the rippling streams,  
And stills their voice of love and dreams.

Bid winter flee and gleesome bring  
The faggots for the hearth,  
And Sabine wine, four summers old,  
To kindle love and mirth.  
Leave to the gods the wintry storms  
That seas to foam-drift tear,  
They'll bid them home, and then the trees  
Will rest in slumbering air.

Draw not the curtain that conceals  
To-morrow from thy sight ;  
Set down as gain whate'er to-day  
May grant in life's strange fight ;  
And while thy blood with youth's proud fire  
Flows mantling through thy veins,  
Essay the dance, prove love's sweet charms,  
Ere come old age and pains.

Glad ramblings thine, and whispers sweet  
Oft 'neath the falling night,  
At trysted hour to fill thy heart  
With rapturing love's delight.

From shady bowers let merry laughs  
 The lurking maid betray,  
 Who faintly holds the forfeit back  
 From soft arms snatched away.

## TO MÆCENAS.

(*Horace*, Lib. III. Car. XVI. Stanza 8. After Fergusson.)

A BURNIE wimplin' blythe an' clear,  
 A wee bit wud forbye,  
 An' wavin' hairsts a' smilin' round  
 Win no' the lordly eye  
 O' him, renowned, wha proudly reigns  
 O'er fruitfu' Afric's gowden plains.

Happier my lot, although I hae  
 Nae store frae busy bee,  
 Nor mellowin' wine; nor haud Gaul's fields  
 Rich fleecy wealth for me.  
 Yet poorth's cauld contractin' grip  
 Is far frae my hearthstane;  
 But if I langed for richer store  
 The joy wad be your ain  
 To ope your han', to meet my will,  
 An' a' my growin' wants fulfil.

Mair wisely I my scanty geir  
 Will thriftilie extend,  
 By bridlin' watchfu' my desires,  
 An' keepin' a' in hand,  
 Than if to Lydia's proud domain  
 I added a' the Phrygian plain.

The lust o' wealth's a hungry hound  
 Wha ever yelps for mair;  
 But he is happy on whose lot  
 God, wi' His watchfu' care,  
 Has sparingly His bounties shed—  
 A wee snug biel' an' daily bread.

## ANACREON ON HIMSELF.

(Ode iv.)

STRETCHED on a tender myrtle bed  
With lotus glories all bespread,  
I wish life's joys to share ;  
Let Cupid, girt, pour rosy wine  
While I, carousing, glad resign  
The task of nursing care.

As chariot wheel, rolled on, our day  
With wingèd feet speeds to decay,  
And bow, ah me ! we must,  
Till bone from bone we crumbling fall,  
And this poor tale be told of all—  
“ Here lies a little dust.”

Then why anoint the lettered stone  
That crumbles like the guarded bone ?  
Why vain oblations pour ?  
Anoint *me* ere my sun goes down,  
My raven locks with roses crown,  
Ere life's short day be o'er.

Give me, O Love ! my charming fair,  
With her I'd baffle grief and care,  
Ere yet I take my flight  
To realms where love for ever fades,  
There join the revels of the shades,  
And flit through Pluto's night.

## ON SPRING.

*(Anacreon, Ode xxxvii.)*

SEE on the path of coming spring  
The smiling Graces roses fling.  
The waves forget their stormy play,  
And slumbering dream the hours away.

Ducks sporting dive, and through the air  
 To other homes the cranes repair ;  
 While proudly mounts the lord of day,  
 And joyous smiles the clouds away.  
 Now sturdy man resumes his toil,  
 And earth foretells a golden spoil.  
 The olives all their life-springs pour,  
 And whisper of a plenteous store ;  
 While mantling through the swelling vine  
 The rich blood flows—my future wine !

### ON A GIRL.

(*Anacreon*, Ode xx.)

A SILENT stone proud Niobe  
 On Phrygian mountain lonely lay,  
 And Pandion's child, the poets sing,  
 As swallow spread her glossy wing ;  
 So I would change :—a mirror rise,  
 And live for ever in your eyes ;  
 Or dearer still, a circling vest,  
 To fold, enrapt, thy throbbing breast.  
 As stream I'd woo with luring charm,  
 And joy to bathe thy graceful form.  
 As ointment steal among thy tresses,  
 And scent the winds that give thee kisses ;  
 As fillet, slumber on thy breast ;  
 Or pearls around thy neck I'd rest ;  
 I'd sandals be and hail it sweet,  
 To bear all day thy tripping feet.

### AFTER TRANSLATING THESE ODES.

HIGH priests of song, unblest with themes  
 Meet for your lyre. Your voice,  
 Toned deep to make proud tyrants fear,  
 Or trembling slaves rejoice,

Is dumb ! The night that girds you round  
With ruffian grip hath choked its sound.

As minstrel at his organ wrecked  
Stands mute, while his high soul  
With rage divine of heavenly sounds,  
That surging through him roll,  
Curbs useless wrath,—asks through clenched teeth,  
Is life a better prize than death ?

So impotent your spirits chafed,  
The everywhere—dark night,  
No hope to sing, no breaking cloud  
To whisper coming light ;  
Life, death unvoiced, were clad in gloom,  
The future—darkness and the tomb ;  
And your sad souls saw loves depart,  
And no new summer blest your heart.

The whirl of fate,—life's hopeless maze,  
Toil's iron curse and pain,  
Grinding the race with demon might,  
Held one terrific reign ;  
While shriek and groan and useless prayer  
Spent their fierce woe on earless air.

“ Baffled ! ” you groaned. No voice was heard  
To teach men how to live ;  
You clutched earth's wine, and love and song,  
What else had she to give ?  
Else had your souls with living flame  
Flashed forth the burning song,  
To shame the craven to his post  
And guide the dauntless on ;  
Till quickening faith and hope's strong might  
Had starred men's sky with quenchless light.

## A HUSBAND TO HIS WIFE.

WHEN you and I were young  
The earth was wond'rous fair,  
And as I, laughing, sung,  
Wove daisies in your hair.

When you and I were wed  
The birds were building nests,  
And hard our toil for bread  
To feed—ah, well!—our pests.

When you and I are dead,  
Our little journey o'er,  
The grass will grow o'erhead,  
And men fool as before!

## THE BOY AND THE BUTTERFLY.

SEE! an eager boy's pursuing  
Yon bright airy butterfly;  
How his glowing eye proclaims it  
Brightest spot in all his sky.  
Now it rests on tulip's bosom,  
Shedding brighter glories there;  
Will he catch it? No, the sunshine  
Woos it upwards—everywhere!

Back to earth! In lily's fair cup  
Nectars, perfumes, tempting vie!  
One swift grasp! both flower and treasure  
In his hand a ruin lie!  
And poor man—earth's golden dreamer—  
Breathless speeds some luring chase,  
Gains his end, but finds it perish  
At his touch, and lost—the race!

## EPIGRAMS, &amp;c.

TO THE REV. —

LET Buddha sleep ; leave Zeus alone,  
 We care not for such dross ;  
 Here's something new, learn it, Mess John—  
 The story of the Cross !

ON AN INEXPERIENCED INSPECTOR OF  
SCHOOLS.

“No crop,” the unskilled reaper cried,  
 While poking round the hedges,  
 Or clutching here and there an ear  
 From off his trampled ridges.  
 The farmer hissed, through grinding teeth,  
 His curses growing deeper,  
 “God sent the glorious golden grain;  
 The devil's come as reaper.”

## ON A REGULAR TWO-BOTTLER.

HERE lies a D.D. cauld an' lane,  
 Amang the lave he had his merits,  
 We wish him plenty where he's gane,  
 For here he lo'ed guid spirits.

WRITTEN ON THE SCHOOL BLACK-BOARD  
INTIMATING NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS.

O LADDIES aft you vex me sair,  
 An' for my tawse you dinna care,  
 To monkeys ye are brithers ;  
 Now, up wi' caps, an' aff ye run,  
 For aucht braw days o' routh o' fun,  
 An' teesin' o' your mithers.



## ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

AN' noo, my bairns, the year's maist done,  
*Your* hairts cry "hame to joy an' fun,  
'Mid hogmanay's grand curran' bun,  
An' greetin's dear"  
*My* heart's strong prayer's for every one,  
A glad New Year.

A PRESCRIPTION FOR THE REV. —'S  
SERMON.

THREE grains of watered Emerson,  
Of Carlyle, tortured, six,  
Of sneer and twaddle, seventy-one,  
Of envy, twenty—mix !

## BARABBAS.

THE following Poem is founded on an old Tradition regarding Barabbas. As I have (purposely) never read Marie Corelli's *Novel* of the above name, I am unable to say how far we follow the same lines, or whether that work is one purely of the imagination of that popular writer. I may add, in passing, the Poem was sketched out in plan and substance fully more than ten years ago.

### PERSONÆ.

KOHATH, *leader of the old Patriot Party. His chief followers*  
HODIJAH, ZADDI, HONAH, BENONI and GOLAN.

BARABBAS, *son of a wealthy Jewish priest, an outcast, who has*  
*lately joined the Rebels; leader of the baser elements of*  
*the movement. His chief followers, EDER, KISH and*  
VASHAL.

RHODA, *a Jewess of high birth; a former lover of Barabbas.*

PILATE, *the Roman Governor of Judea.*

CAIAPHAS, *Jewish High Priest.*

## PART FIRST.

### SCENE FIRST.

RHODA AND BARABBAS.

*Place, HER FATHER'S GARDEN.*

*Time, some weeks before the Passover, A.D. 35.*

*Rho.* O wretched man, when wilt thou own defeat?  
To strike for home and God was call enough  
To make men clutch their swords, nor give them sleep  
Till Salem stood redeemed. Why stand they still?  
Through thee our hopes are withered leaves!

*Bar.* And who are Salem's foes,—the men who die  
For her, or they who sit at home and smite  
Their breasts, ogling the very courts of God,  
And gently tap the doors of heaven with low,  
Soft prayers,—no not too loud, lest they should scare  
The drowsy angels at their rusty gates—  
And ask them draw their swords and make them free?

*Rho.* O sorry wit—worthy thy sword—  
To tip thy speech with sacred things. Blunt is  
The arrow needing such a barb. Heaven's sword,  
In season due, will hold its argument  
Of righteousness with Salem as with Rome.  
Your battle-cry rings hollow in our ears,  
And freedom stands dishonoured in your hands.

*Bar.* Rash maid! tempt not my wrath. Pent  
floods, bursting  
Their bounds, know not to spare, and Rhoda stands  
A slender reed. Who knows our meeting? None!  
'Tis well thou hast a past to shield thee now,  
Or Sheol would another shade enfold.

*Rho.* So lost to what becomes a man! Strike,  
wretch,  
None knows our meeting here. My former hopes  
Will seal my lips, should thy base dagger fail  
Its noble task—a trusting woman's death!

*Bar. (calming).* Thy words cut deeper than the  
sword!

Helpless 'mid wrong, hopeless in right, hunted  
As deer; scorched by the sun, and shivering 'mid  
The hoary dews, what room for reason's calm  
Resolve? A slave will lift his chain and strike  
The tyrant down; and can a Jew stand by  
Like soulless brute, and see his country's wrongs—  
Wrongs deepening with the years. The hills cry  
“Break

Our chains and teach our echoes freedom's songs,”  
And every vale upbraids us for its shame!  
I thought my Rhoda Judah-born, and proud

Of David's blood high mantling in her veins,  
 Forgive this wrong !

*Rho.* The moment is too big for taunt. A sneer  
 Fits little men and things. My sorrow makes  
 My tongue the grave of speech ; my eyes refuse  
 To weep ; their fount is dry ; sleep flees my bed,  
 My country bleeding lies, and none to save !

*Bar.* Why bear we arms ? Why daily die ? Why  
 sow

We earth with graves,—our vales, with widowed  
 homes ?

*Rho.* Shame clothes thy life. Self is thine all ;  
 And selfishness—the touch of dead man's hand  
 Upon the pulses of the soul—kills all  
 The God in man. What are thy bands but sharks—  
 Those living graves that scour the deep,—from them  
 The Jew and alien heir a common doom.

*Bar.* And this from thee ! Remember by-past years.

*Rho.* Do I forget ? Do streams, though lost among  
 The hills, forget their native seas ? I hold  
 A love that cannot die—a life in death,  
 A fadeless glory and a dark'ning night.  
 I'd rob thee of thy shame, brunt man's proud scorn  
 To clasp once more the unstained gold ; but no !  
 Our souls have breathed their last, their long farewell,  
 And memory piles with bleeding hands her cairns  
 Upon our summers dead. They hold a dream—  
 A dream that angels dream, but I've awoke . . .

[*A pause.*]

But why this call ? Why risk my father's house ?  
 A price is on your head ; why play with death,  
 Why measure out your grave, and give to Rome  
 One triumph more ?

*Bar.* 'Tis for a boon—our last, lone hope—  
 A woman's aid to baffled man ! Enlist  
 Corina, Pilate's wife, to bend her lord  
 To hear us sue for peace. Our cause is lost !  
 I ask for life for our brave men alone.

No pardon waits for me. I'd scorn the gift  
 From Roman hands. Cold is the hostelry  
 Of death, but colder is the heart where love  
 Is dead, or living but to know 'tis dead.  
 One short, sharp pang—which men call death, and  
     then  
 Eternal silence and the conquering worm.  
 I've blasted thy proud years and strewn thy path  
 With thorns. My fate—my meed—a night where  
     day  
 For ever dies !

*Rho.* O wound no more ! Tramp not anew  
 My bleeding heart. I grant your boon ; and you,  
 Pray Jacob's God to aid my feeble hands  
 To reach a sister's heart.

*Bar.* To pray with alien heart is mockery !  
 Not yet so low as dare my fathers' God ;  
 I fear His——hush ! There's someone drawing  
     near !  
 Farewell ! The boon !

*[They disappear in different directions.]*

## SCENE SECOND.

*Kohath* AND A FEW COMPANIONS IN MORNING MEDI-  
 TATION. *Place,* A CRAG NEAR THEIR COUNCIL-  
 CAVE.

*Time, fourth day after.*

*Ko.* Here rest, for my strength faileth me.  
 As a fir tree levelled by the blast  
 When the tempest plunders the forest,  
 So the sword hath laid me low.  
 My wounds make me a prisoner,  
 And bind me in worse than Roman chains.  
 I wait for the silent messenger  
 As the hireling the shadow that closes his day.  
 Sweet is this holy calm and the voice of peace,

Silence slumbereth on the hills,  
The clouds rest on their peaks,  
The winds fold their wings and nestle in the cliffs.  
Nature hath here her Sabbath,  
And a voice inviting the weary to rest.

*Zad.* Earth taketh to her bosom the oppressed,

And with tender care sootheth the sad of heart ;  
But the iron hand knoweth not pity  
Nor the oppressor the bondman's cry.  
O'er these hills where morning's footsteps fall,  
And the vales where the peaceful cattle sleep,  
Hearts are wrapped in sadness,  
And voices choke with grief ;  
A man-child is born, but no one rejoiceth,  
And the mother's heart hath no song of praise.

He is swaddled in tears,  
And nurtured in woe,  
That the heathen may rejoice,  
And the uncircumcised be glad.

[*They watch in silence the sun rise.*]

*Koh.* Awake ! Give praise unto the Lord,

And thanks unto our God.  
We will lay aside our sorrow  
And forget our woe,  
In the glory of His works,  
And the majesty of His power.  
He maketh the sun His banner,  
He plants His flag on the mountains,  
He campeth on the hills,  
The valleys wait for His glory,  
And the streams for His golden footsteps.  
He maketh night the cradle of morn,  
And sorrow the nursing-mother of joy.

Our lot is in His hand,  
He forgetteth not His own,  
Therefore we will trust in Him.

*Hodi.* Yea He hideth Himself in light,

The glories of noon are His apparel,  
And rainbows fringe His garments.  
The beams of the morning girdle His loins,  
And the stars are the dust of His feet.

He maketh storms His chariot,  
And the sea for a highway,  
Lightnings play in His path,  
They are the sparks of His chariot wheels,  
And the winds, the sweep of His garments.  
The earth trembleth at His presence,  
At the might of His terrible arm ;  
Yet her voice is the voice of song  
And her fear but a deeper joy !

Her trembling is from the loving touch of His hand,  
As a maid at the touch of her chosen,  
When she giveth her heart unto him.

In the fields she lifteth up her voice,  
And to the mountains she giveth a tongue ;  
The forest is her harp,  
And the winds strike the cords thereof ;  
Hope is her voice at dawn,  
Her thanks, at the close of day ;  
For her Maker is her God,  
And she serveth Him alone.

*Hon.* Earth hath her countless tongues—

Voices from the Unseen—  
Telling out dark sayings to man.  
I have heard the echoes thereof,  
But my ear understood not,  
Yet my heart was glad,  
For His presence was nigh.

As a mother knows her infant's speech,  
So her voices in His ear  
Are but the lisps of His children.  
He writes His name in the heavens,  
The letters thereof are the stars ;  
Night is His shadow,  
And day the brightness of His face.

His voice is in the waters,  
And the streams and brooks are glad ;  
They know the hand that leadeth them,  
Hewing for them a highway through the  
rocks,  
And giving them showers by the way,  
Till they rest in the parent sea,  
And sleep on ten thousand shores.

*Hodi.* See the glad smile of God—light !

The sun lays hold on the clouds,  
His burning footsteps tramp the mists ;  
He kisses the lips of waking morn,  
As he throws wide the gates of day.  
His golden locks stream down the mountains  
And wrap, as with a garment, the hills ;  
The woods break into song,  
And the little hills are glad ;  
He harnesseth day to his labour,  
And giveth night as a season of rest.  
Flowers strew his path,  
And grass, for a carpet ;  
The clouds drop tears of joy,  
And the dews scatter pearls of light ;  
Darkness flees at his presence  
And cowereth in the caves of the earth,  
As a thief from the haunts of men.

*Zad.* Why do the forests “clap their hands”

And the mountains leap for joy,  
When the heart of man is sad,  
And his home is desolate ?  
Has God forgotten Zion ?  
I walk in His shadow,  
And His face is turned from me.  
He forgetteth not the call of the seasons,  
Nor the cry of His dumb creation,  
Yet He answereth not,  
Nor remembers His promise of old.  
The apples of Sodom



He giveth for bread,  
And for rulers the heel of the stranger.  
*Hodi.* Alas for Zion—the tent of God—  
The sun biddeth the grain to spring,  
And the wheat to unsheath the ear,  
Till harvests wave as a sea,  
And the olive yards run as a river,  
But the stranger reaps our fields,  
Till his garner burst with fulness ;  
And the plower sees his lands,  
As a nest robbed by the fowler.  
The stranger crieth, “ha, ha !”  
For his heart is drunk within him,  
His cup is full. The juice of the grape  
Kisseth its rim. It runneth over,  
And his garments are red with its blood.  
Not his the pruning of the vine,  
Nor the purging of its spray,  
Nor the thinning of the grapes,  
Nor the tax of daily toil !  
Hast thou forgotten us, O God of Jacob ?  
Look in the palms of thine hand,  
There Thou hast graven our names !  
May our foe listen to our cry  
And spare us in his hour of strength,  
That the earth no more may feed on the slain,  
Nor the fields be drunk with the blood of Thy people.  
*Hon.* Our redemption will come  
Though the hour be not now,  
He shall be my tent in the wilderness,  
My springs of water in the desert,  
And His wings my covert from the storm.  
*All.* Amen, and Amen !  
[*They part in search of intelligence.*]

## SCENE THIRD.

PILATE AND OFFICERS ; BENONI, A REBEL ;

*Place, A COURT OF JUSTICE IN JERUSALEM ;*

*Time, three days after.*

*Pilate.* Benoni, forward. (*Benoni advances.*)

What is thy mission here ?

*Ben.* To learn Rome's terms of peace ; our men  
to cease

From war, and bid the land have rest.

*Pilate.* By Hercules ! You mouth it proudly, slave !  
"To cease from war and *bid* the land have rest !"   
How quiet Rome would sleep were you to deign  
To give her rest ! Come now,—two hundred stand  
Of arms is Rome's high gift, if ye find men  
To bear the same ! We hold you but a pack  
Of hungry wolves, thirsting for blood.

*Ben.* Thus men for ever judge ; for when the sword  
Is broken in the patriot's hand, the world  
Forgets his cause. Success is ever right !

*Pilate.* Useless more words. Our terms:—Your  
arms laid down ;  
Your bands our prisoners ; Your fate, the will  
Of Rome. She's merciful to noble foes,  
Your answer,—Yea or nay !

*Ben.* I am not here to treat. Not mine  
My ear and tongue. You speak of mercy shown  
"To noble foes," yet hold us "wolves." I fear  
Thee "bringing gifts !"

*Pilate (in anger).* Am I a Greek ? submit, you cur,  
Or, by the gods, the hungry *cross* will hold  
A royal feast. What can you do ?

*Ben.* But die ! but with each sword  
Sheathed in a Roman breast.

*Pilate (descending in anger from his Judgment Seat,  
draws with his sword a circle round Benoni).*

Cross not that line until you bow to Rome !  
Lictors, see no escape !

*Ben. (stooping down and drawing also a circle round himself).*

I've drawn a stronger line than thine, O judge !

*Pilate (puzzled).* What line is stronger than the arm of Rome ?

*Ben.* Her promise of a "Safe Return." Her word Is stronger than her sword. That line, I count, A lumbering jest—Worthy a judge?—to win A laugh from my expected fears. Men who Lie down with death forget the name of fear.

*Pilate (pausing).* True, Jew ; Rome's word Is stronger than her arm. Go, wretch, she knows No mercy till her foes bow in the dust And get their lives, a gift, back from her hand. Guards, lead this man safe to the Eastern Gate, Nor follow him. Rome's honour is his shield.

*[The guards lead him out. Pilate and his officers retire.]*

#### SCENE FOURTH.

KOHATH, BENONI, BARABBAS AND OTHERS ;

*Place, a CAVE IN THE DEFILES OF THE JABBOK ;*

*Time, six days after.*

*Koh.* Benoni, what answer from our foes ?

*Ben.* Rome knows not to pity the fallen,  
Nor to spare the broken in spirit.  
She bids our neck to the yoke,  
And our lives a gift from her hands.

*Zad.* Dark is the lot of Israel,  
Hope weeps o'er forsaken Zion.  
The rocks, more merciful than our foes,  
Have opened their arms for our defence,  
And their woods for a covering.

Death waits on us at eventide,  
And the morning dew waters our grave.  
*Eder.* Did you dream of mercy from Rome,  
And whisper peace to your souls?  
O stumblers in the day! O fools and blind!  
Have the times for you no vision,  
And the doings of Rome no voice?  
Ask ye life from the paws of the bear,  
Or escape from the fangs of the snake?  
Rome maketh empty the hungry  
And chaineth the already bound.  
She tears us with the thorns of the wilderness,  
Our backs with the briars of the desert.  
Men perish before her as waters from the pools,  
When the sun drinketh up their waves.  
Hoar hair asks life in vain,  
A father's tears are naught;  
A mother for her first-born,  
And a maid for her espoused,  
Are as the sighs of the passing breeze.  
They play with death as a jest,  
And the grave as a fool's speech.  
*Bar.* Well spoken, staff of my right hand!  
No Roman shall rule Barabbas,  
Or make him bend the knee.  
Shall we flock as sheep to the slaughter,  
As cowards to dishonoured graves,  
Till our children shall disown us  
And our homes forget our names?  
What can we hope from Rome,  
When the cravens of Zion hiss,  
And her nobles are dumb,  
And the priests mum but prayers,  
And leave their swords to rust,  
And their shields, the prey of worms!  
Judah grows fat in his chains,  
Benjamin says, "rest is sweet."  
My feet have not learned the steps of the fleeing,

Nor my lips the prayers of the coward.  
Death somewhere hath his cup,  
And the grave her covering  
When the cup is drained.

Shall we quaff that bowl to the lees,  
Nor with the Roman share its dregs?  
My rest would be sweet were a foe my pillow,  
And the cover of my grave red with his blood!

No! By my fathers' God!

My country's——

[*Enter Hodijah, with some wounded companions who are at once attended to.*

*Koh.* My son, what new disaster?

*Hodi.* As the grain before the reaper,

And the figs under the storm,

So the mighty fall in battle,

And the brave are laid low.

We lay in the cliffs of Jordan,

Where he giveth his waters to the sea.

We waited the foot of the foe,

As a hunter for his prey.

The moon crested Moab, and the waves

Of the sea slept on the shore.

We heard the tramp of men,

The thunder of their tread,

And the voices of the iron lips.

As a lion on a deer at the brook,

So sprang we on the foe;

Our voice was in our blows,

Our life in the thrust of our spears.

The clashing of the sword and shield

Woke the voices of the wilderness,

And the echoes hiding among the hills.

The wild beasts scented the prey,

And the harvests of war.

As an oak on Hermon fronts the storm,

So stood Golan, our chief, in the fight.

Death waited the reaping of his hands,

And bound up his bloody sheaves.  
As a stone from the mountain,  
Or a tree on the passer-by,  
So fell he on the foe.  
They gave ground to his feet;  
They reeled as a drunken man;  
But the fire of his soul slew him,  
And his right hand gave him death,  
For he rushed in his fury on the enemy,  
They closed on him as water over a stone,  
As the coils of a snake round its prey.  
The spear of the alien pierced him,  
And the earth grew red with his blood;  
Darkness passed over his soul,  
And his spirit entered into the valley of death.  
Our hearts became as water,  
Our arms forgot their strength;  
The moon hid her face in pain,  
The pitying clouds veiled the sky,  
And their robes hid the silent stars.  
Under their wings we took covert,  
And the woods cried, "Come and live."  
It is the hour of desolation,  
And the triumph of despair!  
*Ben.*       What is left but death?  
Our feet stumble in the day,  
And fear crowdeth the night;  
We are a by-word to our foes  
And the laughter of the streets.  
Ebal and Olivet bow in grief,  
There is sorrow on the sea;  
Sharon casts off her adornments,  
And the lilies bow their heads;  
They heard our song of hope  
And the voice of our rejoicing;  
They were glad when we lifted the spear,  
And furbished the sword for Zion.  
They sang of daybreak on the hills,

And of night dying in the lap of morn.  
Now they see the stranger triumph,  
And hear his daughters sing for joy.  
They behold mothers asking for their sons,  
And for their daughters taken for a prey  
And none to deliver them,  
Or ask, "What doest thou?"

*Bar.* I have sworn in mine anger,  
And spoken in my fury,  
Oppression hath driven me mad,  
And despair nerves my soul,  
And the graves of the slain cry, "avenge!"

Benoni's mission is a barren waste,  
Golan walks with the shades of the dead,  
And the grass is greener through our slain.  
Every well is a Marah,  
Or the waters of the sea of Lot.  
Death is now my treaty of peace,  
And the grave my end of strife.  
What is left to the oppressed,  
And for him that hath no might?  
Let him league with the night,  
And clothe himself in darkness;

Let the secret sword become his right hand,  
And the midnight fire his left,  
Giving their leaders to the——

*Voices.* Never, never! not so sunk—(*his voice is  
drowned by the clamour*).

*Zad.* Thy voice is the voice of madness  
And thy purpose folly!  
Have our foes but one leader,  
Or will the secret sword reach the heart of Rome?  
As the sea casts up its mire,  
So rouse you the passions of men.  
Because heaven has closed her gates  
Will you rap at the door of Tophet  
And take counsel of hell?

*Bar.* Your heaven and hell are both asleep,

And hear alike with flinty ear,  
 And hands unused to save.  
 Where was thy God when we struck hands ;  
 Held He thy banner in the day of blood ?  
 You were as sheep lost in the wastes,  
 As a traveller in a rainless land ;  
 Where then thy God, " Mighty to save,"  
 Thy Maker strong——

*A Voice.* Silence, thou son of Belial !  
 [*Cries of disapprobation from all sides.*]

*Hon.* Let honour crown our deeds ;  
 Our glory—stainless hands,  
 Though victory know us not  
 And our banner—in the dust !  
 Barabbas has no to-morrow,  
 Nor day of recompense.  
 Murder is not war, nor flames freedom.  
 Lawlessness has smitten our cause,  
 And broken the sword in our hand ;  
 The voice of Barabbas taught it,  
 And we reap its dishonour.  
 I can but weary day with my tears,  
 And burden night with my sighs——

*Bar. (interrupting).* Weep on, poor Jeremias,  
 A woman in garments of man !  
 Weep, but not at the time of harvest,  
 Lest you vex the soul of the reaper ;  
 Nor in the early rain,  
 Lest the vales be drowned with water,  
 And the pastures be drunk with floods.

*Zad.* Honah never shrank from battle,  
 Nor forsook the wounded in their need !  
 He has given bread to the hungry,  
 And all his substance to our cause.  
 You have shared in his bounty,  
 And eaten of his salt.  
 Whose hand saved you at Olivet ?  
 How came that sword-scar on his brow ?



*Bar.* (*waiving these hints against himself*).

Hear my resolve,—Barabbas can die !

For him the fetters wait in vain.

What is your lot, ye slaves ?

Morn calls a man to his labour,

And at night the stars watch his grave ;

For the tyrant sought his gold

And he dared to hold his own.

Jordan bids you wash away the stain,

And the brooks cry, “Where are your spears ?”

*A Voice.* Our cause is lost ; why make more houses  
desolate ?

*Bar.* “Our cause is lost,” our wrongs remain !

[*Lifting up his sword and addressing it.*

Avenge me, my thirsting sword,

Wipe out my wrongs, my trusty steel !

I call thee to a feast,

Vengeance has a voice for thee,

And the dead ask, “Where art thou ?”

I will celebrate a Passover,

And the Romans shall find the lamb !

I leave you to your tears, ye slaves,

Ye sons of feeble knees,

To your counsels that make confusion,

And your hopes to the tender mercies of Rome.

Those that are mine, awake,

Clutch spear and axe and follow me !

[*He leaves the cave with his followers.*

*Koh.* Where now, that desperate man ?

Some new dishonour waits our cause !

*A Voice.* ’Tis but the anger of the hour,

Peace will be his at close of day.

*Zad.* Barabbas taketh counsel with himself,

And his followers have sealed lips.

Why do we longer strive

And lift the useless sword ?

The people bow to the yoke,

As the ass to his burden ;

Our country refuseth our blades,  
Over her knee she has broken her spear,  
And throws us her shame  
As answers to our cry.  
As rivers mix with the restless deep,  
So let us with our fellow-men.  
The peasant garb will cover us,  
And distant vales enfold us.  
The timid Pilate will be glad,  
For victory will cover him,  
And write him a man of war,  
And his cravens will rejoice.  
He is not a man of blood to pursue,  
Nor his hand iron to a beaten foe !  
[*They finally defer this question to a future meeting.*]

## PART SECOND.

## SCENE FIRST.

PERSONÆ.—KOHATH, EDER, KISH AND OTHERS.

*Place, THE CAVE AS BEFORE ;*

*Time, seven days after.*

*Koh.* Has Eder news of his leader, Barabbas ?

*Eder.* Kish has returned and waits your call.

*Koh.* Bid him enter (*enter Kish*).

*Koh.* Kish, give evidence on oath.

*Kish.* (*raising his right hand*). I swear by Zion's Altar. Barabbas has led us to our fall and deeper depths of shame. He drew us from your Council ; he spoke with seducing tongue. "Varo," cried he, "has our gold, taxes wrung from our people, and red with the blood of oppression. *That* gold forges our chains and gives us the lot of slaves. Get back your own and bid them know that we still dare." We

listen, are won, strike hands and swear—"death alone to sever us." Jerusalem is reached, we enter, blending with the throng. Day dies and night gives silence and the stars. Varo's house is reached; we force the gates, beat down the guards; the strokes of the swords and the shouts of men startle the night. Varo is slain; his wife falls by his side. His son springs to avenge their fall. Love thrilled me for that boy, so weak in frame, so strong in heart. I am a father and in the hour of need would wish for such a son; but Barabbas, with that look we often feared, smote him to the ground, and the blood of parents and child ran in one red stream. The house is ours, but the gold is gone! "Give the pile to the flames," cried Barabbas, "fire wipes out the handwriting of blood." It is done, and the flames, like willing slaves, do swift their work. The soul of the freeman was no longer ours; we had sold ourselves for gain and our swords for gold, and fate gave us empty hands. The dross of Salem gathers round; swift its hands to destroy, and hotter grows the bloody strife. Men for their wives and children and sons for their fathers draw the sword, demanding more than life for life, for the hand of right is strong. Unled by our leader, we strike but to destroy. The soldiers come; Barabbas falls; we flee the maddened crowd fighting their unequal fight. Now our reward is dishonour and the curses of our fatherland.

*Zad.* Hard it is to condemn the fallen,  
Or the man ready to perish;  
But I feared Barabbas, the reasonless,  
Nor withheld from him my reproof.  
He that scorneth his father  
Laugheth at the tears of his mother,  
And the maid ready to die for him,  
Call ye him a man,  
And a leader of Israel?  
*His* never the voice of the patriot,

Nor his sword the sword of the freeman.  
Self was this man's God,  
And power his heaven.  
Changeable as the wind,  
Unstable as the sea,  
He knew not to obey,  
Therefore could not rule.

Yet in moments of nearing danger,  
When we held unsteady counsel,  
And the hour denied escape,  
He'd rise out of his sordid self,  
Sow words of hope and strength,  
Till we said, "Is this Barabbas?"  
'Twas like a long-forgotten voice,  
Rich in the tale of the years,  
And wisdom gleaned through many days.

*Vash.* I will defend my leader 'mid his fall,  
And his sword broken in the dust.  
In his presence ye were dumb,  
And bridled your iron words——

*Zad.* No, no! we met him face to face,  
Therefore he shunned our Council,  
And chose his own dark ways,  
Let Varo's fate be for our proof.

*Vash. (continuing).* Now you have found your  
tongues

As jackals o'er the slain.  
Call him the wayward child of impulse,  
Swayed as grass by the passing breeze;  
Yet his was the patriot's fire,  
And the heart of the freeman.  
He felt the yoke and the chain,  
And panted to break their thrall.

At the tale of oppression  
And the cry of distress,  
He'd grind his teeth in his fury,  
His lips pressed white with rage,  
Then his word shook the soul with fear,

And his glance was a voice of terror.

*A Voice.* We will remember his faults no more.

*Eder.* I mourn my chief—my light is gone !

As a guide who dies in the desert

And leaves men helpless in the waste,

So am I left alone !

His good I remember now,

His cross is with his enemies.

He has fallen in the midst of his daring,

And we shall drink the cup of his folly.

He scorned my words against this plot,

Bade me creep as a mouse to my cave,

There hide my timid soul in peace ;

He wanted men not children

Who trembled at a shadow.

But it was not Barabbas that spoke.

A spirit of evil, as of Saul,

Dark from the valley of Tophet,

And black with the shadows of death,

Scourged him to run his course,

To travel with rapid foot,

And find his early rest.

As the eye seeks the light,

So I turned to him,

For strong was he to lean on,

And his right hand a defence.

As spring lures the flowers from the ground,

So swayed he the hearts of men.

The glance of his terrible eye,

The grasp of his iron hand,

Gave courage to the timid

And chained men of stern resolve.

As a snake holds a bird

Fluttering over its nest,

With its gaze of secret might——

*A Voice.* Till the blow is struck

And the victim is lost.

*Koh.* Silence ; let Eder proceed——



*Eder (continuing).* So drew he men to him,  
 They bent to his iron will,  
 As a forest under a storm.  
 But our tears are now in vain,  
 And our cry as a voice in the desert,  
 For the strong in battle has fallen,  
 And his mighty heart forgets to beat.  
*[They finally resolve to watch the Roman  
 action after this political crime. They then  
 disperse to report to their several bands the  
 Resolve of the Council.]*

## SCENE SECOND.

*Place.* A ROMAN TRIBUNAL AT JERUSALEM.

PILATE, *Judge*; BARABBAS, *Prisoner*;

*Time, ten days after.*

*Pilate.* Barabbas, thou hast heard the witnesses;  
 A leader of a desperate band, a foe  
 To Cæsar and to Rome. Thy hands are red  
 With blood, and dead men from their graves call for  
 Thy life; but Cæsar bids thee plead thy cause;  
 We wait; make thy defence.

*Bar. (pale and weak from a severe wound).*  
 A glorious privilege thy Cæsar gives  
 To every hapless Jew. 'Twere worth a song  
 Would wake the everlasting hills to join  
 The proud refrain, and tell it to the years  
 Unborn, to hear of justice to a Jew!  
 Why plead? Thy lips betrayed the hollow cheat—  
 The heartless——

*Pilate.* Dar'st thou insult the majesty  
 Of Rome, and smite her through her judge? I hold  
 Thy life in my right hand.

*Bar.* Then is it Rome's proud arm or Pilate's whim  
 I've more to fear? But what is life to thee

And me? Doubtful at best. What sunshine's thine?  
 The hand of Cæsar holds thee for the hour.  
 Morn sees thee in thy might, a province at  
 Thy feet—thy gifts high posts and lives of men;  
 Eve, thrown aside—a broken tool—and blest,  
 If privileged, to wear thy hoary head  
 And creep forgotten to the grave——

[*Murmurs in Court.*

The men who round thee smile and fawn, would hail  
 Thy death a joy——

[*Noise and commotion among the Officers.*

*Pilate (much moved).* Silence in Court. His words  
 are true. The ships at sea bear the crashing storm,  
 while small craft creeping round the bays proceed  
 in peace. Does he reflect your thoughts; his  
 rambling speech, your secret wish? Prisoner, go on.

*Bar.* Thy death a joy, not for their hate of thee  
 But love of self,—thy grave a stepping-stone  
 To dark intrigue. But what is life at best?  
 What tell the years? The cry of babe at birth  
 But prophesies the groans of worn-out age,  
 The years between one long-drawn wail of woe;  
 But to the Jew—a living death, with all  
 The woes of life without the peace of death;  
 Despised yet feared; grief our inheritance,  
 Sorrow our food, despair our covering,  
 The tardy grave our envied goal of rest.  
 Rome gave me birth; she made me what I am;  
 Her iron hand forged me my sword; her laws  
 Gave me my battle-cry; her myrmidons  
 My prey. I give her back her own, but mourn  
 I'm weak to render her due recompense.

*Pilate (shewing great forbearance).* Rash youth,  
 Why throw thy chance of life away?

*Bar.* My doom is sealed. O cheat—"the right  
 to plead!"

'Tis but a cloak to hide a crime——

[*Angry shouts in Court.*

*Pilate.* Rome treats alike all 'neath her care.

*Bar.* Then have I dreamed, most noble judge,  
I heard you talk of "dead men from their graves  
Calling for blood," and this poor life in thy  
"Right hand?" Forgive, just judge, the wrong I've  
done

To Cæsar and to thee, and Pilate stands  
More noble than he seems.

*Pilate.* Know ye, the lictors wait with knotted thong  
For men who mock a judge?

*Bar.* And they may boast, they too have scourged  
a chief  
Of Levi's blood.

*Pilate (shewing impatience).* Where hide your bands,  
And Rome will not forget your aid?

*Bar.* By Aaron's beard! how great a bribe!  
Within this heart they hide. There seek and find.  
To shed the blood of Jew till streets are wet  
With that red rain is naught, but when Rome's  
crimes

Are answered back with Roman blood, then but  
The cross awaits the hated Jew. With you,  
The hour and might! No Cæsar is my king.  
No fetters reach the soul but those she deigns  
To wear. Thus stand I free spite of these chains

*(holding up his hands heavily ironed).*

By me that Roman fell on his own hearth!  
It was a brother's right to wipe away  
A sister's wrongs, and men breathe purer air  
Since he has found his doom!

*Pilate.* And yon proud, darling boy! O noble Jew,  
O patriot soul! O mighty, unstained sword,  
What glory waits on thee! Once more, Why waste  
Your hour? Does death not hunt our steps with all  
Too hurrying strides, that we should haste the end?  
Why court a mid-day grave? Perhaps some maid  
Looks at your prison-walls, and 'mid dead hopes  
Mourns o'er your hapless fate!



*Bar. (suppressing strong emotion).* As if to bear  
a Roman yoke were life !

The patriot with his country dies. Her grave  
And his are one. The marriage bed and love !  
I'd scorn to sire a slave. Earth's mandate is—  
"All nations free." My chains have taught me what  
Your race denies !

*Pilate (aside).* He makes me love him spite his  
blood.

Such men make freedom possible. Build Romes  
On tyrants' graves, and then—and then ?

*Bar.* Were hope not vain, I'd long for life to  
strike

Once more with wiser hands for home and love ;  
But all is dark. Adonai answers not,  
Nor speaks of freedom to the slave.

*Pilate (smiling).* Invoke my gods if yours are  
dumb !

*Bar.* Thy gods ! I'm nobler than thy stocks and  
stones

Though carved with cunning——

*Pilate (in anger).* Mock not my country's gods  
Whose arms have chained the world.

*Bar.* Even these poor hands (*holding them up*).

*Pilate (impatiently).* Let this end. You've no  
defence ; no advocate, no witnesses, no friend to  
plead ! These words your all to this dark charge ?

[*Barabbas bows with a look of indifference.*

*Pilate.* Go, lictors, do the rest. One hundred  
stripes. Eight days from hence,\* on Calvary, his  
cross between two thieves ; no burial ; to dogs his  
body for an evening meal. This my decree. Obey  
or die. [*Barabbas is hurried away by the guards.*

\* NOTE :—The date of his condemnation corresponds to our  
6th April. John, the Divine, kept 14th April as the date of  
Christ's crucifixion.

## SCENE THIRD.

KOHATH AND OTHERS ;

*Place, THE CAVE ;**Time, six days after the Passover.*

- Koh.* Comrades in Arms ; our sun is set !  
Let wisdom guide us in our common woe !
- Vash.* Pent in these rocks, brooding o'er wrongs,  
The rust eats to our hearts,  
Our fears whip us to slaves  
Till courage flees our hands,  
And manhood oozes to decay,  
For faithfulness is vain,  
And struggle—waste of life !
- Kish.* Is all our hope a vanished dream,  
Our plans a vision of the night ?
- Koh.* No sun can raise the broken reed ;  
The fallen stone returns not to its height.  
Our bands grow less and less,  
As leaves on autumn trees.  
No answer Judah gives,  
And Benjamin is dumb ;  
Jerusalem sleeps at ease,  
Her head upon her country's grave ;  
I counsel then—Disband !  
'Twere crime to struggle more.
- [*A voice without is heard singing the Pass-chant. The guards bid him "advance in peace."*]
- [*Enter, Barabbas, amid loud expressions of joy and wonder and many questions.*]
- Bar.* (*demanding silence and patience*). My tale is long. Doomed by our foes to scourge  
And cross ; the prison mine. Smarting with pain  
And fevered lips, I sought forgetfulness  
In sleep. It mocked my call, and lengthened out

The weary hours. Then night—grudging the gift—  
At last gave tardy day. Ere noon, loud shouts  
And tramp of men shook all the street. Nearer  
The crowd, while children's glad hosannas rang  
A triumph-song ! . . . O sunny childhood's years,  
Unprized till lost ! *[A long, troubled pause.]*

Fighting my pain, I sought my window-bars,  
To read the language of the roaring street ;  
There, 'mid the throng, a man of noble mien  
And look of dignity and love, upon  
An ass. The crowd strewed palms and olive boughs  
And robes upon his path, and filled the air  
With lusty praise and welcomes to his own.  
They passed and then the clangour died away,  
Lost in the wandering air. I thought :—Is this  
Some dreamer too for our sad land ? I saw  
My past, my hopes and plans ; my prison walls,  
And earth's last gift—a grave—denied. I shed  
For him and blind Jerusalem, a tear !

Death hurries when his time is set !  
My last sun-down seemed come. Again a crowd,  
With yell and maddened rabblement surging  
The street, and that strange man, pale, calm and sad.  
No "blesseds" now rang through the air. "Away  
With him, away !" leaped from their throats with all  
The brute-force of the ruffian streets. 'Twas past !  
The heartless nothingness of rabble praise  
Had spent itself—dead as the palms that strewed  
His way. How dark ! One narrow week had hurled  
Their idol from his throne ! "To Pilate's seat,"  
"Not fit to live," were their hosannas now !

My last morn rose. How beautiful that dawn !  
It asked me why I'd cast such gifts away ?  
The heavens hung bending o'er Jerusalem,  
Like mother feasting her glad eyes upon  
Her waking child. Earth clothed herself in song  
And smiled through flowery eyes. Jehoshaphat  
Spread out his slopes, where silent sleeps

The glory of our race. My heart grew faint,  
These brawny limbs refused to welcome death,  
My raven locks cried out against the tomb!  
'Mid battle's shock, a skilled right hand may dash  
Death's spear aside; the comradeship of arms  
Cries, "play the man!" But when death's tramp is  
nigh—

Is growing on the ear—and thou, alone,  
'Mid scorn and shame, must front the silent foe,  
The cheek will pale, the boldest quake with fear!

Then through the corridors, the tramp of men,  
The call, "Bring forth the prisoners." My heart  
Stood still; the key jarred in the lock; it cried,  
"Prepare to meet thy God." My unbelief  
Had died. Death teaches with unerring tongue.  
The door's thrown wide. The jailor with a smile  
Upon his rugged face, cried, "Life for thee,  
Barabbas! Pardon's thine! Off with the badge  
Of death. Go to the day—the glad free air  
Of heaven. Yet sooth, I bear sad news to two,  
Last night thy mates in woe." Lost in a dream,  
Such as the three youths dreamed, when round the  
flames

Leaped harmlessly and licked with hungry tongues  
The empty air, I reached the street. Again  
A yelling, rabble crowd, and that pale man  
Bearing a Cross! A love yearned in his eye  
That reached the heart. He for the people mourned,  
As men asleep, dreaming of peace, while o'er  
Them hung the fatal sword, and in their woe  
Forgot his own. Amid the roar I heard  
His words to weeping women near, "Weep not  
For me but for yourselves . . . your children, for . . .  
If in the green . . . What in the dry?" I joined  
The throng. Two prisoners are hurried out;  
The march of death tramps on. The pale man sinks  
Beneath his load. "Here," cried the guards, "here  
let

The culprit die. No hand may touch the beam  
Of shame !” “No,” cried the priests, “’tis holy  
ground !

Without the gate, there let him die !” A son  
Of Ham stood near ; him they compel to bear  
The cross. O strange ! Shem, Ham and Japhet blent  
To compass one poor death ! Dread Calvary  
Is reached. Such scenes ye know. A thief on right,  
On left, *The Man* between, and on his cross  
“Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews !”

*Kish.* The Nazarene ! Rejoice ! He’s met his  
fate !

*Bar.* What he has done is his. The grave must  
hide

His past. Ill comes that cry from one whose cross  
Casts its dark shadow o’er his path.

*Kish.* The public voice condemned the man.

*Bar.* Say, voices of the priests ! He fearless bared  
Their hollow lives, hypocrisy and pride.  
The slaves of Herod shuddered ’neath his lash,  
And lawyers, baffled, turned away, or owned  
The greatness of his words. Loved of the poor,  
The outcast’s friend ; at whose low feet the vile  
Hath wept, and lust hath softened into shame ;  
His words—the treasure of the sad in heart.  
Enough. I know but this, he died for me !  
I saw myself there on the cross ; his sweat  
My sweat, his pain my pain, his death my death.  
The priests stood round translating hate to deed  
In godless joy. ’Mid jeer and taunt, they watched  
The cruel hours squeeze out life’s dying flame,  
While bending town-dross answered with their tears.  
A sudden darkness clutched the sky ; fear slew  
My strength. I fled, yet think I leave myself  
There on the Cross !

*Vash.* We saw the darkness, felt and feared.

*Bar. (resuming).* That night his body filled a  
borrowed grave——

*Vash. (interrupting).* Not to the dogs?

*Bar. (continuing).* A rich man begged to give his  
dust a tomb.

My life came thus :—Rhoda, that noble maid,  
My guardian angel through the years, awoke  
The father in my sire ; his brother-priests  
She won. Fighting their “ *nays* ” with woman’s tact,  
She pledged them ask from Pilate my release.  
That night I slept beneath my father’s roof,  
A lost sheep back into the fold. A son  
Forgiven, and his sins forgot. O bliss !  
O grateful love and tears ! Sorrow and joy  
Singing one song—a father’s pitying love.  
I know what heaven is now ! What thanks are mine  
For my escape, what tears for him who died  
For me !

*Koh.* Praise the Lord, the Mighty to save !

By the hands of a maid hath he done this,

And by weakness overcome the strong.

He clotheth Himself in darkness,

And His path is in the circle of night.

He calleth and day openeth her eyes,

And life springs from the shadow of death.

Barabbas is living to praise Him ;

Death had encompassed him,

Sheol had prepared his habitation,

Then He brake the bands of the destroyer,

And shut the mouth of the grave.

*All.* “ Praise the Lord for His goodness

And His works to the children of men.”

*Bar.* My soul is smitten and my bones cry out,

For my hands that were wet with blood

And dark with the guilt of Cain,

Now stretch themselves to heaven

And rejoice in the blessed sun,

While the hands swift to aid,

And the tongue wise to guide,

And the heart that lived to bless

Are wrapped in the robes of death,  
And his spirit, in the land of shadows.  
    God hath touched the eyes of the blind,  
    Yet I see Him not, nor understand,  
    I grope out for Him but find Him not,  
        And yet He is nigh ;  
    Will it turn to my shame,  
    And deepen my reproach ?

I will cling to Him in my weakness,  
    And clutch the right hand of His might,  
    And wait for the day !

*All.* Amen ! Strengthen, O Lord, the uplifted  
    hands.

*Kish.* Is there no hope for our cause ?

*Bar.* Can a man cross a stream on a shadow,  
    Or sleep on the breast of a cloud ?

Men ask, " Will the lame win the race,  
Or the blind lead through the desert ? "

    Death hath baptized me into life,  
    And schooled my rebel soul,

Till all my past's a dark accusing dream.

    I have heard the voice of the Lord,

    Not from Zion His holy hill ;

    The winds whispered it not,

    Nor did the sea tell me,

But the sealed lips of the battlefield,

And the glazed eyes of the slain,

And the iron gates of the prison,

And the clank of the felon's chain—

These were His voices, and they cried,

" Not by thy hand shall Zion be freed,

Nor the bands of my people be broken ! "

    Lay aside then the sword,

    And break the useless spear ;

Let the shield hang in the desolate hall,

    And thy buckler in thy closet ;

    Take the plough in thy hand,

Eat the bread of men bitter in heart,



And drink the cup of the vanquished.  
 The foe will not pursue,  
 He knows our shattered strength,  
 And thirsts not for our blood.  
 Tears make my manhood weak,  
 And tell the all you are to me ;  
 Remember vanished friends  
 Whose graves the lilies know !  
 Dear are they to our souls,  
 Their names—our heritage.  
 Thrice blest are they in death,  
 The living bear the deathless woe ;  
 For us but——(*a long pause*)  
 Farewell, farewell ! A long farewell !

[*Barabbas under deep emotion leaves the Cave. After a short consultation (many of them in tears at this sad end to all their hopes and noble sacrifices), they agree to disband. They bid each other farewell and go out in different directions to inform their respective bands of their resolve.*]

### PART THIRD.

#### SCENE FIRST.

*Place, A COURT IN JERUSALEM ; CAIAPHAS AND  
 OTHER PRIESTS, Judges ; BARABBAS, a Prisoner ;*

*Time, some years after.*

*Caia.* Barabbas, 'neath thy father's vine we've met ;  
 Then, thou, a boy—a young oak by the brook—  
 With promise fair of noble life. Where now ?  
 Charged “as forsaker of thy fathers' God !”  
 My joy, thy sire sees not this stain, nor me  
 Thy judge. 'Mid thy bold deeds on battlefield  
 We wept, we prayed for the——

*Bar.* At dead of night, in accents soft and low,  
 Lest Rome should hear thy treason-cry ! Why not



*Then draw the sword and battle for thy God?  
 No praying heart hath idle hands. You prayed!  
 Hear wondering earth, and listening Hades hear  
 This man of men! What noble sacrifice!  
 What condescending grace! How honoured heaven  
 Would feel at thy high patronage! Prayers scale  
 The heights of heaven when built on active faith;  
 But motive still gives principle to deeds.*

*Caia. (not heeding his words). And when that  
 Nazarene*

*Or thou wert put for choice, we gave our voice  
 For thee. Return! The dire "too late's" not come!  
 Who hath this man believed? No name, no grace  
 Of manner his; poor and alone, despised;  
 No learning gleaned at rabbi's feet; his hands  
 Not for a sceptre born; or brow, a crown!*

*Bar. A crown he wore—of thorns—  
 Lost Eden's heritage!*

*1st Voice. He claimed no earthly crown! He  
 ope'd my eyes.*

*2nd Voice. I saw him raise the dead!*

*3rd Voice. No, no! Deceiver! Friend of the  
 outcast and the lost.*

*Bar. "Friend of the outcast and the lost."  
 Thanks for that cry! 'Tis water to the thirsting soul!*

*Priests. He was an impostor—deceiver—cheat.*

*Bar. O wondrous cheat to make the blind, the  
 deaf and lame believe they saw, and heard and ran,  
 and made the very dead believe life's gift was theirs  
 again. Could God do more?*

*Priests. These he did through Beelzebub.*

*Bar. O good Beelzebub! great then thy gifts to  
 men,  
 Come back, and bless us still!*

*[Great confusion and angry cries in Court.]*

*Caia. Speak to the charge, poor, wretched man!*

*Bar. "We've met before;" when patriot blood  
 thrilled all*

Thy veins. Thy words fell quickening fire. As boy  
 I listened, longing I were man to strike  
 For home and God. The air rang freedom's call,  
 And Jordan's waves refused a yoke ; the birds  
 All asked,—“ Hast thou no arm to bid thee live ? ”  
 And Caiaphas still fed my hate of Rome.  
 What thy response when freedom's hour was come,  
 Thy battle-cry to thrill men's soul to live ?  
 No glory sunned her thunder-path ! Unused  
 Her Godlike trumpet hung within  
 Thy halls. Her fields of dust and blood, her days  
 Of darkness lit by faith and hope alone,  
 Were calls too great for thee to dare. Good priest !  
 'Twas easier far to mum your prayers before  
 You dozed asleep to dream sweet priestly dreams  
 Of mammon's sparkling wine.

*A Roman Officer (who has been unnoticed by Caiaphas).* This man accuses thee of treason.

*Caia. (agitated).* Some loose, unguarded words at worst when blood was young, and Rome's benignant rule was yet unknown.

*[Angry cries of “coward,” “traitor,” “slave of Rome.” The Officer threatens to bring the soldiers to break up the Court. Quietness being restored the defence proceeds.]*

*Bar.* Yes, wiser now ! When Annas reached  
 The priestly span, his post, through Rome, was thine,  
 Then love to fatherland was thrown aside  
 For these proud robes which now you wear. I pause.

When budding youth in me to manhood crept,  
 And passion spoke, I, listening, fell. But why  
 Repeat ? I sank—disgraced my father's house—  
 Broke one true heart, and reaped the outcast's doom.  
 I fled to Kohath's bands. Their faith fired all  
 My soul. I poured my life into their cause.  
 But wearied with its bitter hopelessness,  
 Where night itself in fear cried out for day—  
 For morn whose eyelids never ope'd, I urged

Reprisals from our foes. My soul fell from  
Its high intent and self was all.

[*The Roman Officer, after speaking to Caiaphas, retires evidently satisfied. Caiaphas, altered in manner, in angry tones bids Barabbas proceed.*

*Bar.* You asked for my poor life. Was it your  
love

To me, or hate to Christ that——

*Caia. (in bitter anger).* Dar'st thou, even here,  
blaspheme

That sacred name! That wretched Nazarene  
Was not the Christ! What proofs were his of this  
High name?

*Bar. (turning suddenly and pointing to the door).*

His witnesses stand at the door,  
They enter now in white apparel and throng  
The Court, a heavenly glory round each brow;  
Each, in his hand a scroll. They wait your call  
To witness to the truth.

*Caia.* Is this an hour to play the fool? Or does  
Some madness hold thee slave?

*Bar.* Then bear my madness in your clemency.

[*Turning to the witness-seats, he speaks as if  
addressing a person present, and thereafter  
gives his (apparent) answer.*

What is thy name, O shade?

*1st Shade.* Isaiah, and my voice:—"He shall  
grow up before Him as a tender plant, as a root  
out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeli-  
ness; and when we shall see him, there is no  
beauty that we should desire him." "He is  
despised and rejected of men . . . he was afflicted,  
yet he opened not his mouth, . . . his grave was  
appointed with the wicked, but he was with the  
rich in his death;" and I lay my Scroll at the  
Judge's feet.

*2nd Shade.* My name is David, thy Prophet-

king; my witness this:—"They gave me gall and vinegar to drink; they laugh me to scorn, . . . they shake the head, saying he trusted in the Lord . . . let Him deliver him, . . . they pierced my hands and my feet; they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture;" and I lay my Scroll at the Judge's feet.

*3rd Shade.* Zechariah my name, and my cry:—"Rejoice, O daughter of Zion . . . behold thy King cometh unto thee . . . lowly, and riding on an ass, . . . They shall look on me whom they pierced;" . . . "so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver . . . a goodly price that I was prized at of them . . . and I cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord;" and I lay my Scroll at the Judge's feet.

*4th Shade.* I am John Baptist and my voice:—"There standeth one among you, whom ye know not . . . whose shoe-latchet I am unworthy to unloose . . . behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;" and I lay my Scroll at the Judge's feet.

*Caia.* How long's this mummary to last? I have borne your daring for your father's sake, but this must end.

*A Priest.* The man's beside himself! He's mad!

*A Voice.* No, no! All true! All happened in our midst.

*Bar.* I own thy great forbearance; but one voice more.

*5th Shade.* I am Moses in whom ye trust, and my warning this:—"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet . . . like unto me . . . and whosoever will not listen unto my words which he shall speak, I will require it of him;" and with my stern *Beware!* I lay my Scroll at the Judge's feet.

[*Great commotion in Court, but full of solemnity and awe, mingled with expressions of sympathy for Barabbas.*

*Caia.* (after a painful pause). Speed thy defence.

*Bar.* Christ's glory's my defence. I saw his death !

Has earth ere witnessed such before ? The sun  
Withheld his face ; earth trembled at the deed.  
The riven rocks, the open graves—first-fruits  
Of His great reaping time—you know these well !  
I heard the tale of “ sleeping guards,” the raid !  
How strange ! His friends forsook their living Lord,  
Yet dared the Roman spear for His cold dust !  
And who believes this tale ? Not Caiaphas  
Nor yet these priests, my judges now ! What search  
Made ye to find the crucified and shame  
The clumsy plot ? I heard bold Peter's call.  
The crowd was dumb ; they knew and feared. He  
charged

You murderers, proclaimed Him Christ, the——

*Priests.* Silence, vile wretch !

*Bar.* (not heeding). I heard his “ come and live ;”  
I pledged my soul, and, entering in, found Him  
The life indeed. And since, by prayers and tears  
And cries to men, I've lived to spread his name  
And lead men home. Your rites, your Paschal lambs,  
Scape-goats, all meet in him, and have their end ;  
Unneeded now as moon at full-grown morn.  
Your judgment pass and make my joy complete.

[*The priests retire into a private room for consultation. After a long intense hour of waiting they return and take their seats on the Judgment Benches.*

*Caia.* Barabbas, hear :—The God your fathers  
served

Now casts you off. Thy doom, a voice to all !

*Bar.* He never was more near than now !

*Voices.* Mercy, mercy, Caiaphas ! he fought for us !

*Caia.* I sit in Moses' chair. Our law——

*1st Voice.* What of the Prophets' Scrolls? All these are linked with Christ, the crucified.

*2nd Voice.* Judas got thirty pieces of silver, and with the sum you bought the potter's field!

*Caia.* Seize, guards, these men! Who dares insult the Sanhedrim?

*A Voice.* Sadducee! The slave of Rome!

*[The cry is repeated by several, with strong marks of approval among the audience.]*

*Caia.* Bring me at once THE BOOK OF LIFE!

*[After some delay it is brought and placed upon the table. In dead silence Caiaphas searches it carefully, and then in a loud whisper says, "Yes, here it is:—'Barabbas, son of Abbas, of the Tribe of Levi, of the Order of Bilgah," (See 1 Chron. xxiv. 14.) He then lifts a pen and slowly draws a deep line across the entry of his birth, and then turning to Barabbas says:—*

'Tis done! Though living thou art dead. I've dashed thy name from out the *Book of Life*—(groans and angry cries in Court and great confusion).

*Caia.* To-morrow at the Eastern Gate——

*Bar.* Where Stephen died?

*Caia.* Yes, there; within sight of thy childhood home;

There die the death that waits blaspheming lips.

And, Hilcol, youngest of our Court, attend

As Saul at Stephen's death, and at thy feet

The witnesses will lay their clothes. See thou

For us his death. Guards to your task.

*[Barabbas is removed amid opposing cries from the audience.]*

## SCENE SECOND.

*Bar. (alone in a cell near the Eastern Gate (now St Stephen's Gate) of Jerusalem on the evening of the same day).*

Again this Cell ! What arrows mine when *last*  
A prisoner. Heaven, earth and hell stood then  
My foes—their hates forgot in hate to me.  
The sunlight on the floor roused my hot wrath,  
It mocked me,—asked, “Why is the day not thine ?”  
No hope, no friend, no angel visitant  
Save one, that maid, my star in better years ;  
Yet her pure presence woke a pang more fierce  
Than death. Life's splendid purpose thrown away !  
The all I might have been for God and man !  
Her blasted life, its voiceless grief, and tears—  
The balm of bleeding hearts—through woe, denied !  
Ungladdened by one gleam of shame, remorse,  
My proud heart iron still—I see her now !  
I spurned her pleading love, till in my woe  
To make my hell less fierce, I bade her come  
No more ! Rage winging all my words, I loathed  
Myself, and cursed my day of birth. Yet oft,  
Even then, I thought (it gave a hope) heaven looks  
On sin through woman's eyes.

Day limned the bitter Cross, the rabblement,  
The fevered lips, the tardy steps of death,  
The unclean dogs to close life's dreadful tale !  
That night is past. 'Mid prison walls and chains  
I yet am free ; sin's fetters broken at  
My feet. My name now in the better “Book  
Of Life.” I'll write the secret of my peace  
Upon these walls. Perhaps, with angel voice,  
They'll cheer some outcast at his close of day.

*[He writes some sentences on the wall.*

I'm strangely glad ! Earth stands more fair and  
wears

A sweeter smile—a silent song of joy,  
Where mount and sea and plain blend voices, meet  
For ear of God. Yet leaving all but gives  
A passing pain, lost in the new-born joy  
That ever suns my sky. How soon I'll see  
Him with his marrèd brow and hands, and hear  
From His own lips His love for me. Yonder  
Gethsemane ! O let me gaze !. I see  
Him there,—the cup—His agony ! Then life  
Or death hung in the scales ! 'Tis drained,  
The victory's won, and Calvary pays the bond,  
And Justice gives his awful sword to Love's  
Eternal care.—I gaze on Olivet !  
The spot where His last footsteps trod. Perhaps  
He gave one glance to dark Gethsemane,  
And thee, O Calvary, ere yet He left  
His new-won 'heritance, and vanished from  
His little band who watched with awe, His grand  
Return unto his own ! [*He watches the fading day.*  
*Bar. (resuming).* The light is dying on the hills,  
And darkness climbs the eastern sky, stealing  
The glories of the sun till lilies fail  
To know their sisters from the noisome weeds.  
With quickening step it comes—is near, and all  
Around deep silence falls. Now night has wrapped  
Proud Olivet beneath her robes, and woos  
The world to rest. The stars powder the floor  
Of heaven, and silent watch the woes of earth.  
I go to sleep to dream of worlds more fair  
Than this grand footstool of our God.



## SCENE THIRD AND LAST.

BENONI and Others of the disbanded insurgents  
waiting the return of VASHAL, their messenger,  
having heard some vague rumours of the im-  
prisonment of their old Leader, BARABBAS.

*Place, A ROOM IN JERICHO ;*

*Time, three days after.*

Ben. Call Vashal in. He waits for us.

*Enter Vashal, travel-stained and sad.*

Ben. What news, co-mate in grief?

Vash. My tale is grief, I bear a cup of woe,  
Our brave old leader treads the vale—  
The further shore of death—  
He calmly pressed the latch,  
Flung wide dim Sheol's silent door,  
And as a conqueror entered in.

Ben. Where and how, my son?

Vash. Stoned at the Eastern Gate!

All (in surprise). Stoned? Barabbas stoned!  
But that's a Jewish death?

Vash. Would that mine ears had never heard,  
"Take him away;" "The earth cries out  
To drink his blood;" nor eyes have seen  
The ground give up her instruments of death,  
Nor witnesses their garments lay  
At Hilcol's feet!

All. What hath he done? Why stoned?

Vash. The mystery deepens round the Nazarene—  
The pale dead man of Calvary.  
The sharers of his tender care  
Are waxing bold and dare the priests;  
They hold his death the only sacrifice;  
Our rites a worn-out thing of yesterday—

The swaddling bands of childhood's years—  
Our manhood now in Him is come! . . .  
*Kish.* And do the priests allow it?  
*Vash.* My tale will answer thee. Wert thou of  
Levi's tribe,  
I'd bid thee join the priests. They need such  
aid!  
But I proceed. Our sacred Books they know,  
They smite men dumb.  
And shut the scoffers' lips,  
And hold Him judge of all!  
I'm lost amid the din around his cross,  
And baffled at his empty grave!  
Barabbas joined the Nazarenes,  
Became a soldier of the Cross.  
As on red battle-fields he dealt his blows  
So rained he fury on men's lives.  
It grew from height to height,  
As hills on hills to mountains rise.  
Awe-struck the people heard,  
Felt God was near,  
And blest the God of Israel.  
His words swept as a flood,  
As Jordan in the winter rains.  
He 'whelmed the priests with shame;  
They bent their smitten heads  
As bulrush 'neath the raging flood.  
He charged them murderers of our "*Hope!*"  
Then with the crowd he'd plead  
With sweet persuasiveness and love,  
To ope their hearts, repent, believe and live!  
He won his father to his faith,  
And saw the old man enter rest;  
And laid him where his fathers sleep.  
He heired his wealthy store,  
Nor held it as his own.  
But as a trust for fellow-men.  
It fell as water on the thirsty ground,

As living streams in barren wastes.

He asked but souls for hire !

The Priesthood gnashed their teeth,  
They cried, "give him the gates of death,

The silence of the grave,  
And Tophet for his prison-hold."

He smiled at fear.

He knew the cost ; no choice for him ;

Christ his ! and all was his !

Silence was treason to his Lord.

Death met him at the dawn of morn ;

He gave his spirit to his God

Upon the spot where Stephen died !

*Kish.* And now the house of Abbas hath no son,

Another name has perished,

And a tree fallen in Israel.

*Vash. (continuing).* I've seen him in the hour of  
stern despair

Rise 'bove the storm, as eagle 'bove the clouds,

Flash out his thoughts, and pour his burning life

Into our lagging veins. He stood a tower !

But till that day I never knew that man !

Unshorn of dignity and restful calm,

As if no sharer in the scene, he rose

An oak amid the brambles creeping round,

His face aflame with victory and peace.

Death, in his presence, bowed his head and felt

His littleness. On Olivet he gazed—

O to unchain his lips and read his thoughts !

That gaze arrests the crowds. They turn and look,

The mountain clothed in light is all they see,

And wonder more ! Yet strange that sight the  
mount—

Its olives fringing all its wavy skirts—

Stood out *a voice for God* ; but here, around,

The prisoner and gloating crowd, holding

As joy the feast of death—*a voice for man*,

A narrow vale between. He kneels—'tis done—

Life's tale is told—his battle fought and won—  
He walks behind the veil, where footsteps send  
No echoes to our straining ear. By these  
Poor hands (*holding them out*) he found a grave amid  
his sires

In Kedron's vale, where his young footsteps dashed  
The morning dew from waking flowers, and——

*[He stops overcome with emotion, the others  
sharing it with him.]*

*Zad.* Are my aged eyes ever to weep  
O'er vanished friends, and shed  
Their fruitless dews upon their tomb?  
Kohath is not; Golan had found his rest;  
Hodijah treads the silent land,  
And Rhoda greets Barabbas on the further  
shore.

Fill ye the cup of lamentation,  
For the cedars of Lebanon are fallen,  
And the oak tree sheddeth untimely leaves.  
The earth crieth, "Bid the day perish!  
Wrap me in the garments of night,  
That I may weep for my children that are not,  
And for the blood which reddens my garments."

*Ben.* I have heard of this prophet,  
This Nazarene, born of the people.  
The outcasts gathered hope from his words,  
And fought for freedom for their souls.  
He bound up the bleeding wounds,  
And gave the sad a song of joy,  
And kissed the little ones  
Nestling at his feet.  
Goodness followed his every path,  
As flowers the footsteps of spring.  
Yet for his love they gave him a cross  
And for his deeds a borrowed grave!  
*Kish.* Did Barabbas leave the old paths for naught,  
And was Abbas fooled by a lie?  
I shall seek after this Jesus——

"The 'dead man' of the priests,  
 The "alive for evermore" of his people.  
 What, if our priests have erred  
 And given the Hope of Israel to the Cross?  
*Eder.* O Barabbas, my chief, and thou, too, taken!  
 Wronged of the Romans in thy father's house,  
 And by our priests on thine own head.  
 When the winds of eve are dying,  
 We will hear thy voice of tenderness;  
 When tempests make the mountains groan,  
 And forests cry out with pain,  
 We will hear thy shout of battle,  
 And the stroke of thy sword in the strife!  
 Not now do I behold thee,  
 Nor mine ears hear thy voice,  
 Yet mine eyes shall see thee,  
 And in the glory round thy death  
 My soul shall rejoice.  
 Though mine eyes are red with tears  
 Because the mighty have fallen,  
 And our hope for Jerusalem hath perished,  
 Yet before Adonai let us bow,  
 He remembereth the years,  
 And the glory of His right hand;  
 For He doeth what is best,  
 And wisdom is the breath of His mouth.  
 He giveth light on the path of sorrow,  
 As day leaps from the arms of night;  
 For the beginning and the end are His,  
 And the ways of man work out His will!  
*All.* Amen and Amen!

*[They rise in silence and leave the room.]*

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